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Contents

FEATURES

5 **PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 3 DEBUT: THE ARDENT**
Get an exclusive look at another new class from *Player's Handbook*® 3. This month, the ardent!

17 **SWORDMAGE ESSENTIALS**
By Andy Collins
Learn the secrets to building and playing the swordmage, arcane defender.

25 **FAMILIAR POWER: WIZARDS**
By Arthur Wright
Familiars are more than just shoulder dressing for your wizard. These new powers feature kickers that activate if you have a familiar.

30 **ASSASSIN'S TOY CHEST**
By Mike Mearls
More goodies for your assassin, including more feats and ki foci!

33 **AVENGER ESSENTIALS**
By Rodney Thompson
Learn the basics to building a complete avenger, divine tool of justice of the gods.

42 **CLASS ACTS: AVENGERS**
By Rodney Thompson
More toys for avengers, featuring a slew of new power options.

45 **CLASS ACTS: FIGHTER**
By Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Learn the secrets of the School of Twenty Blades.

48 **CLASS ACTS: WARLOCK**
By Robert J. Schwalb
The Blasphemous Libram is capable of great evil—and granting great power.

53 **CLASS ACTS: DRUID**
By Aidyn Newman
New options for the shifting druid in all of us.

56 **CLASS ACTS: INVOKER**
By Robert J. Schwalb
New options for those invokers who awaken their inner god fragment.

59 **POWER PLAY: ARCANE POWER**
By Stephen Radney-MacFarland
All arcanists seek more power, but the followers of the Gloaming Path seek it in the place some say arcane power was born: the Feywild.

62 **POWER PLAY: PRIMAL POWER**
By Tavis Allison
Those who learn the secrets of primal mapping can find their way more easily in the world.

65 **WINNING RACES: DROW**
By Bruce R. Cordell
The drow are known for their treachery and viciousness, but some learn to tap these innate callings to serve a higher cause.

68 **WINNING RACES: ELVES**
By Robert. J. Schwalb
Twilight elves are Sehanine's chosen, and they have gained some of the patron's mystery, and much of her power.

71 **CHANNEL DIVINITY: THE TRAVELER**
By Chris Sims
Those who are devoted to misdirection and stealth often find the Traveler's ways suit their own.

74 **SOLO ADVENTURE**
By Chris Sims
A *D&D* 4th Edition solo play adventure for one 1st-level character. Rescue your adventuring party and help the goblin Splug at the same time!

99 **KNOW YOUR ROLE: CONTROLLER**
By Robert J. Schwalb
New feats and tips to give your controller more oomph.

102 **GUILDS & GROUPS: MOON CATCHERS**
By Bruce R. Cordell
The followers of Iltani the Blue seek to return her to the sky and guard the world against a great catastrophe.

COLUMNS

4 **EDITORIAL**

106 **CONFESSIONS OF A FULL-TIME WIZARD**
By Shelly Mazzanoble
D&D's "Player-in-Chief" shares more of her wisdom and insight.

111 **RPGA REPORT**
By Chris Tulach
The Living FR campaign is in full swing. Learn more about how to get involved!

115 **AMPERSAND**
By Bill Slavicsek
Bill discusses more of the changes in store for *D&D* in 2010.

ON THE COVER
Illustration by Steve Prescott

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DRAGON

382

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Career Change

(Or, Your Character Sheet as Résumé)

Those of you following *Confessions of a Full-Time Wizard* (and if you don't, you really should), are likely aware of the friendly debate waging between the author and myself—which, in no small part, involves honor, trust, betrayal, life, death, and the career choice of one slight, black-feathered fellow named Holden Cawfield.

While Holden may be crow-like in appearance (he is, you see, a kenku), his actions are more cuckoo-like in nature. The cuckoo hides its eggs in another bird's nest to be raised unwittingly. And this is how Shelly viewed Holden. He presented himself as one thing only to become another—not for his party's interests, but entirely for his own.

A little backstory to this debate: Shelly and I play in the same *Scales of War* campaign. A few months back, Holden auditioned for an open spot at the table, won it, and promptly joined the Wyld Stallions' as a much-needed cleric.

Then *Dragon* published the assassin class. Holden simply couldn't resist.

I won't go into the intrinsic coolness of the assassin class, how I've played one since 1st Edition, or how well I feel its mechanics work in 4th Edition (though I am campaigning for a ranged assassin/sniper build). I'll only say that once the assassin appeared, I lobbied to change Holden's class, and our DM agreed.

Shelly cried fowl (last bird reference, I promise). Holden had been hired as a cleric, and—she felt—should remain one.

My defense, and the point of this editorial, goes as follows: There are, quite thankfully, a wealth of classes in this game, and a typical campaign involves sessions spanning months, if not years, of play. Many players are satisfied to run their character as originally designed for the entire length of the campaign. To them, adventuring parties resemble the Fellowship of the Ring; it just wouldn't fit for Gimli to put down his axe or Legolas his bow and start learning to cast spells under Gandalf's tutelage. On the other hand, some players like the opportunity to sample classes. They are experimenters, dabblers, the cobblers of mechanics. Without forcing their character's death or retirement, it makes sense that they be allowed to change careers mid-campaign. There's no judgment being cast here on either style; you should play your character however you see fit, which is the heart of my argument.

Career changes happen, at the best of times, for the advancement of the character in question. Bilbo Baggins started out as a middle-aged homeowner, became a burglar, then later a traveling historian. Aragorn started as a ranger of ill-repute, only to become a field marshal, and finally king. Look at Cattie-Brie, who literally did lay down her bow to learn spellcasting. In fact, consider virtually anyone you know in the real world. I have myself worked at amusement parks, as an overnight hotel valet, delivered phone books, operated as a CIA hit man, taught English, and edited technical manuals along the course of my career.

All that said, I would not advocate career changes often or thoughtlessly. You should ask your DM's advice and permission—and you should consult your fellow players, to make sure they don't feel an important role is being vacated to the party's detriment. In Holden's case, this meant multi-classing as a cleric (of the Raven Queen, of course) and purchasing magic items to further help with healing, to soften the blow of my decision.

We often talk that the job of the DM is to make sure everyone around the table is having fun. To a large extent, the same holds true for you as the player—your job is to make sure that you're also having fun, and so contribute to the group's overall enjoyment of the game. At the most basic level, your fun begins with the character you're playing; if that character is interested in changing careers, that option should be on the table.

Just take our recent playtesting of OP's Lair Assault adventure. Afterward, Shelly herself considered a career change for her character—from Tabitha the wizard to Tabitha the barbarian.

The defense rests.

Debut Content
Player's Handbook 3

Ardent

By Robert J. Schwab

Commentary by James Wyatt and Peter Schaefer
illustrations by Chris Seaman

"The fate of the world rests on the fire of your passions."

CLASS TRAITS

Role: Leader. You fill your allies with the will to fight and the clarity of purpose needed for victory. When you attack, you loose thoughts that intensify emotions and lay bare truths. Depending on your choice of class features, you lean toward either defender or striker as a secondary role.
Power Source: Psionic. You are a spiritual warrior whose thoughts swirl about you to infect your enemies with doubt and fill your allies with confidence.
Key Abilities: Charisma, Constitution, Wisdom
Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude, +1 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 + Constitution score
Hit Points per Level Gained: 5
Healing Surges per Day: 7 + Constitution modifier

Trained Skills: From the class skills list below, choose four trained skills at 1st level.

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Athletics (Str), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Streetwise (Cha)

Class Features: Ardent Mantle, ***ardent surge***, Psionic Augmentation

COMMENTARY
Peter Schaefer: Just like the psion's design made it clear that it should be an Intelligence class, the ardent's method of projecting and wielding emotions make Charisma the perfect choice.
JW: When we designed the kalashtar race in the *Eberron Player's Guide*, bonuses to Wisdom and Charisma seemed like a really good fit. I remember somebody saying, "But that doesn't make them good psions." And I said, "They'll be good at some psionic class, I'm sure." And here's that class.

COMMENTARY
James Wyatt: The ardent is the psionic warlord. While the warlord shouts encouragement, inspiration, and commands to his allies, the ardent taps directly into his allies' minds to achieve similar results. I like the ardent as a passionate, tempestuous foil to the psion's calm rationality.

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Those who let their base emotions rule them invite madness and destruction. Prolonged feelings of fear, greed, lust, or hatred can weaken the mind's defenses against manipulation. Wielding psionic power, you excite such emotions in your enemies, creating gaps in their defenses and frustrating their attacks, all while filling your allies with encouraging thoughts and guarding them against despair and other negative emotions.

Ardents rarely learn their art through formal training. In many ways, they are incidental leaders, having stumbled onto psionic power at some point earlier in their lives. How you discovered your psionic talent can shape how you wield this power now. You might have awakened to your talent in the heat of battle, experiencing a mental breakthrough that allowed you to augment your attacks by rending your enemies' minds. Or your friends might reflect your power when your mood bleeds into theirs, altering their emotional states to match your own. Regardless of the revelation, you learned to harness this power to support your fighting prowess and to guide your allies to victory.

COMMENTARY
PS: Originally, each mantle (of which one debuts here) shared the same power. That power was more offensive than *ardent alacrity* and fit well with the other build, but seemed out of place for this more defensive build. That led to the addition of *ardent alacrity* and tying each to a different mantle

Ardent Class Features

Ardents have the following class features.

Ardent Mantle

COMMENTARY
JW: The name of the class and some of the terminology within it—such as mantles—come from a 3rd edition class that appeared in *Complete Psionic*. That's about where the similarity ends, though.

A person's state of mind can be armor against the decay and madness born from base emotions, and thus ardents gird themselves by donning particular mindsets to ward off the perils brought on by fear, despair, and hatred. Various emotional states, called mantles, can safeguard the mind. Ardents most commonly use the mantles of clarity and elation.

One Ardent Mantle option is presented here. It gives a power to you as well as a benefit to you and your allies.

Mantle of Clarity: You and each ally within 5 squares of you gain a bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks. The bonus equals your Wisdom modifier. In addition, each ally within 5 squares of you gains a +2 bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks. (If a character is in the radius of more than one Mantle of Clarity, the bonuses are not cumulative. Only the highest ones apply to him or her.)

You also gain the *ardent alacrity* power.

Ardent Surge

You gain the *ardent surge* power. Your advanced emotional state is inspirational, motivating your allies and helping them to recover from injuries.

Psionic Augmentation

COMMENTARY
JW: Like the psion and unlike the monk, the ardent makes use of psionic augmentation to make at-will powers stand in for encounter attack powers.

Through discipline and careful study, you have mastered a form of psionic magic that offers greater versatility than other characters command. You know a broad array of at-will powers, each of which is a conduit through which you can pour as much or as little psionic energy as you choose. You channel psionic energy into a reservoir of personal power—represented in the game as power points—that you can use to augment your at-will attack powers, replacing the encounter attack powers that other characters use.

As an ardent, you acquire and use powers in a slightly different manner from how most other classes do.

At-Will Attack Powers: At 1st level, you choose two at-will attack powers and one daily attack power from your class, but you don't start with any encounter attack powers from your class. You can instead augment your ardent at-will attack powers using power points. These powers (and certain others, notably the encounter attack power you gain from an ardent paragon path) have the augmentable keyword (see the sidebar).

You gain new ardent at-will attack powers, instead of new encounter attack powers, as you increase in level. At 3rd level, you choose a new ardent at-will attack power. At 7th, 13th, 17th, 23rd, and 27th level, you can replace one of your augmentable ardent at-will attack powers with another one of your level or lower. The power you replace must be augmentable.

Power Points: You start with 2 power points. You gain 2 additional power points at 3rd and 7th level, 1 additional power point at 13th level, and 2 additional

power points at 17th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th level. If you gain power points from another source (such as your paragon path), add them to your power point total. You can use your power points to augment any augmentable power you have, regardless of how you gained the power.

You regain all your power points when you take a short or an extended rest.

Level	At-Will Attack Powers	Power Points
1	Choose two	Gain 2
3	Choose one	Gain 2 (4 total)
7	Replace one	Gain 2 (6 total)
13	Replace one	Gain 1 (7 total)
17	Replace one	Gain 2 (9 total)
21	–	Gain 2 (11 total)
23	Replace one	Gain 2 (13 total)
27	Replace one	Gain 2 (15 total)

COMMENTARY
PS: When it comes to designing and developing psionic powers, the minor augment (Augment 1 in heroic and paragon tiers, Augment 2 in epic tier) are often a challenge. The goal is to create an augment that is conditionally as good as the full augment but isn't always desirable or worth the cost. It's a hard line to walk.

COMMENTARY
JW: This sidebar is slightly updated compared to the version that appeared in the Psion debut, and replaces that text. This definition includes a few clarifications, and it changes how augmentable powers interact with things like the human's Bonus At-Will Power trait.

THE AUGMENTABLE KEYWORD

A power that has the augmentable keyword has optional augmentations, which you can use at the cost of power points. You use these rules when you use an augmentable power.

Decide First: You must decide whether and how to augment an augmentable power when you choose to use the power, before you make any attack rolls or apply any of the power's effects.

Power Point Cost: An augmentation specifies its cost in power points. For example, "Augment 1" means you must spend 1 power point to use an augmentation. You must spend the required power points when you decide to use the augmentation.

One at a Time: You can use only one augmentation on a power at a time, so you can't, for example, spend 3 power points to use both a 1-point and a 2-point augmentation on a single power.

Replace Base Effects: When you augment a power, changes to the power are noted in the augmentation. If an augmentation includes a specific power entry, like "Hit" or "Effect," that entry replaces the entry in the base power that has the same name. An augmented version of a power is otherwise identical to the base power.

Unaugmented: When you use an augmentable power without augmenting it, the power is referred to as unaugmented for that use (some effects apply only when a power is unaugmented). A power that doesn't have the augmentable keyword is never considered unaugmented.

At-Will Attack Powers: When a power or some other effect lets you use an at-will attack power, you can choose to use one of your augmentable at-will attack powers, but you must use it unaugmented.

When a racial trait grants you an at-will attack power of your choice and you choose an augmentable at-will attack power, the power loses both the augmentable keyword and its augmentations.

Creating an Ardent

Ardents depend on Charisma more than other abilities. Constitution is important for powers that improve your allies' attacks, and Wisdom is important if you want to foil your enemies' attacks. You can choose any powers you like, though many ardents favor one of the two builds described here.

Enlightened Ardent

You read your enemies' weaknesses and reveal them to your allies, and your keen insight helps your allies overcome damaging effects. Make Charisma your highest ability score. You should also consider investing in Wisdom to take advantage of powers that confuse your enemies. Your secondary role is defender, and your leadership helps protect allies from harm.

Suggested Class Feature: Mantle of Clarity

Suggested Feat: Bolstering Mantle

Suggested Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Heal, Insight

Suggested At-Will Powers: *focusing strike*, *psionic shield*

Suggested Daily Power: *wormhole plunge*

Ardent Powers

When you use your ardent disciplines, you transmit your thoughts and emotions to those around you. These sensations bleed into nearby creatures, either filling them with despair and pain or hope and vigor. Your powers are accompanied by visual signs, contained in a sudden corona of light that swirls out from your head and flares around you. The light's color reflects your mood, with brilliant scarlet flashes representing anger; green, health and vigor; black, fear and death; and so on. When you augment your powers by spending power points, the corona intensifies.

Ardent Overview

Characteristics: You lead your group from the front lines, mixing strong melee attacks with equally strong mental assaults. Your strikes can dismantle your enemies' defenses and make them more vulnerable to your allies' attacks. In addition, you can provoke allies to perform daring stunts and maneuvers, helping them gain better positions, leap across the battlefield to close with distant foes, or shrug off deadly afflictions.

Religion: Ardents gravitate toward wild and unpredictable gods, favoring those who represent war or wilderness. Kord and Melora are the most popular, with more independent ardents following Avandra. Evil ardents find much to like in Bane and Gruumsh.

Races: Humans, half-elves, and kalashtar are the most common ardents, though dragonborn, halflings, gnomes, and tieflings also excel in this class, having the natural charisma needed to focus their inner strength.

COMMENTARY

JW: Manipulating emotions is definitely a two-edged sword. Ardents inspire and invigorate their allies and crush their enemies under the heels of despair, dread, and hopelessness.

Class Features

You have the powers *ardent surge* and *ardent alacrity*.

Ardent Alacrity — Ardent Feature

As you take a hit, your emotional energy inspires your allies.

Encounter ✦ Psionic
No Action **Close** burst 5
Trigger: You are bloodied by an attack
Target: Each ally in burst
Effect: Each target can use a free action either to shift 1 square or to move half his or her speed.

COMMENTARY

JW: I imagine a powerful psychic scream formed of the ardent's pain galvanizing nearby allies to action.

Ardent Surge — Ardent Feature

You send a surge of powerful emotion that revives a faltering ally.

Encounter (Special) ✦ Healing, Psionic
Minor Action **Close** burst 5 (10 at 16th level)
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target can spend a healing surge and regain 1d6 additional hit points.
Level 6: 2d6 additional hit points.
Level 11: 3d6 additional hit points.
Level 16: 4d6 additional hit points.
Level 21: 5d6 additional hit points.
Level 26: 6d6 additional hit points.
Mantle of Clarity: The target gains a +1 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
Mantle of Elation: The target gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Special: You can use this power twice per encounter, but only once per round. At 16th level, you can use this power three times per encounter, but only once per round.

COMMENTARY

PS: The mantle of clarity's defensive nature also shows up in its healing power, which I think is a first.

JW: The mantle of elation is the other option for the Ardent Mantle class feature, which you'll see in detail in March!

Level 1 At-Will Disciplines

Energizing Strike — Ardent Attack 1

The energy and emotion you put into your attack flows into your ally.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and one ally within 5 squares of you gains temporary hit points equal to one-half your level + your Charisma modifier.
Augment 1 (Healing)
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and one dying ally within 5 squares of you regains hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.
Augment 2 (Healing)
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you or one ally within 5 squares of you can spend a healing surge.

Focusing Strike — Ardent Attack 1

You attack your foe with calm and clarity of mind, extending that clarity to give a nearby ally a chance to clear a lingering effect.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you or one ally within 5 squares of you can make a saving throw.
Augment 1
Hit: As above, and if the saving throw is against a charm or a fear effect, it gains a power bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier.
Augment 2
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you and each ally within 5 squares of you can make a saving throw.

Psionic Shield — Ardent Attack 1

As you strike your foe, you motivate a nearby ally with a calm determination to defend himself or herself.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and one ally within 5 squares of you gains a +1 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
Augment 1
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and one ally within 5 squares of you gains a power bonus to Will equal to your Wisdom modifier until the end of your next turn.
Augment 2
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and each ally within 5 squares of you gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Level 1 Daily Disciplines

Implanted Suggestion — Ardent Attack 1

You compel your enemy to open itself to attack.

Daily ✦ Charm, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The target is affected by your suggestion (save ends). Until the suggestion ends, whenever the target makes an attack, one ally adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against it as a free action after the target's attack is resolved.

Wormhole Plunge — Ardent Attack 1

Your foe falls through a hole in space and appears some distance away from you.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Teleportation, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: You teleport the target a number of squares equal to your Wisdom modifier, and then one ally adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against it as a free action.
The attack creates a zone in the space that the target vacated. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. Any creature that starts its turn within 3 squares of the zone is pulled 1 square toward it or into it. As a free action, you can teleport a creature within the zone 3 squares.

Level 2 Utility Disciplines

Dimension Swap — Ardent Utility 2

You fold the space between yourself and an ally so that you can switch positions.

Encounter ✦ Psionic, Teleportation
Move Action **Close** burst 5
Target: One ally in burst
Effect: You teleport yourself and the target, swapping positions.

COMMENTARY
JW: My paladin really enjoyed using *benign transposition* for a while, but I'd sometimes catching myself teleporting just because I could, when what I really wanted was to make the attached 2[W] attack. I think having that ability in a standalone utility power is a lot more flexible—and also feels very psionic.

Mind over Matter — Ardent Utility 2

You convince an ally that the wounds he or she suffers are not as bad as they seem.

Daily ✦ Psionic
Minor Action **Ranged** 5
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target gains temporary hit points equal to his or her healing surge value.

Level 3 At-Will Disciplines

Distracting Strike — Ardent Attack 3

With a savage strike, you wrench your enemy's attention from an ally.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and either you or an ally adjacent to the target marks it until the end of your next turn.
Augment 1
Effect: The marked condition ends on allies adjacent to you, who can each shift 1 square as a free action.
Augment 2
Close burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst

Prescient Strike — Ardent Attack 3

You see the danger and let your weapon serve as warning to your comrade.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage. When the target attacks you or an ally adjacent to you during its next turn, you can make the following secondary attack against it as an immediate interrupt.
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: The target takes a penalty to its attack roll equal to your Wisdom modifier.
Augment 1
Hit: As above, but you can make the secondary attack only if the target attacks your or the ally's Will. You gain a bonus to the secondary attack roll equal to your Wisdom modifier.
Augment 2
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage. When the target attacks you or an ally you can see during its next turn, you can make the following secondary attack against it as an immediate interrupt, with a bonus to the secondary attack roll equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Level 5 Daily Disciplines

Enlightening Pulse — Ardent Attack 5

Clarity pulses out from your mind, creating an area that helps your allies free themselves from unfavorable circumstances.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Effect: The attack creates a zone in a close burst 2. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. When an ally damages an enemy that is within the zone, one ally within the zone can make a saving throw with a power bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Fate Exchange — Ardent Attack 5

You bend space to let yourself and an ally exchange positions.

Daily ✦ Healing, Psionic, Teleportation
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and one ally in burst
Effect: The targets teleport, swapping positions, and can then each make a basic attack as a free action, with a +2 power bonus to the attack rolls. For each of these attacks that hits, you or one ally you can see can both spend a healing surge and make a saving throw. If both basic attacks miss, you regain the use of this power.

Level 6 Utility Disciplines

Evade Attack — Ardent Utility 6

When your friend steps into harm's way, you whisk him or her to safety.

Encounter ✦ Psionic, Teleportation
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** 20
Trigger: An ally is hit by an opportunity attack
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: You teleport the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier.

Mend Wounds — Ardent Utility 6

You accelerate your friend's natural healing ability so that his or her wounds close with amazing speed.

Daily ✦ Healing, Psionic
Minor Action **Melee** touch
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target regains hit points as if he or she had spent a healing surge.

Level 7 At-Will Disciplines

Courageous Strike — Ardent Attack 7

You strike at your foe and fill your friend with courage, bolstering both of you against the foe's attacks.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you and one ally adjacent to you gain a +2 power bonus to AC against the target's attacks until the end of your next turn.
Augment 1
Hit: As above, but the power bonus applies to all defenses, not just AC.
Augment 2 (Zone)
Close burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. You and your allies gain a power bonus to AC equal to your Wisdom modifier while within the zone.

Mindlink Strike — Ardent Attack 7

Linking minds with an ally, you coordinate your efforts to confound your foe.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** 1
Target: One creature
Effect: One ally adjacent to you can make a melee basic attack against the target as an opportunity action. On a hit, you and the ally can each shift as a free action.
Augment 1
Effect: As above, and the ally gains a +3 power bonus to the damage roll if he or she is marking the target.
Augment 2
Close burst 1
Target: Each enemy you can see in burst
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and one ally adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against it as an opportunity action.

Level 9 Daily Disciplines

Dulled Reflexes — Ardent Attack 9

Your foe moves slower and slower until it can't move, and its slowness infects its allies.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to speed (save ends). Until the penalty ends, it worsens by 2 whenever the target attacks. When the target's speed reaches 0 in this way, the penalty ends, but the target is restrained and stunned (save ends both).
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to the target is slowed (save ends).

Feast of Plenty — Ardent Attack 9

You wrap your foe in a psionic net that leaches power from it for your allies.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target takes damage, you and each ally adjacent to you gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

COMMENTARY
JW: I like the flavor of using psionic powers to coordinate your allies' actions, bringing your group into greater harmony.

Level 10 Utility Disciplines

From the Brink — Ardent Utility 10

Your friend hovers near death. You touch his or her mind, and your friend awakens with a start.

Daily ✦Healing, Psionic
Minor Action **Close** burst 10
Target: One ally
Effect: The target regains hit points as if he or she had spent a healing surge. If the target is dying, he or she regains additional hit points equal to 2d10 + your Charisma modifier. In addition, the target can stand up as a free action.

Incite Bravery — Ardent Utility 10

Your allies find new courage with your support.

Encounter ✦ Psionic
Minor Action **Close** burst 1
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each target gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and a +2 power bonus to saving throws against fear effects.

Level 13 At-Will Disciplines

Hope's Audacity — Ardent Attack 13

Your optimism and confidence are an inspiration to those around you.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage. Until the start of your next turn, allies within 5 squares of you can score a critical hit against the target on a roll of 19-20.
Augment 1
Hit: As above, and whenever an ally scores a critical hit against the target before the start of your next turn, you and each ally within 5 squares of you can shift 1 square as a free action.
Augment 4
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage. Until the start of your next turn, allies within 5 squares of you can score a critical hit on a roll of 19-20.

Revelatory Strike — Ardent Attack 13

As you strike, you open your ally's mind, allowing him or her to see ways to overcome various ills.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage. One ally adjacent to you or the target can either make a saving throw or gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
Augment 1
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage. One ally adjacent to you or the target can either make a saving throw with a +5 power bonus against a charm or illusion effect or gain a power bonus to Will equal to your Wisdom modifier until the end of your next turn.
Augment 4 (Zone)
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage. The attack creates a zone in a close burst 2. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. Any ally who starts his or her turn within the zone can either make a saving throw with a +2 power bonus or gain a power bonus to all defenses equal to your Wisdom modifier until the end of his or her next turn.

Commentary
JW: The language of enlightenment and revelation throughout this class's powers hint at its heritage as the psionic class most tied to the gods.

Level 15 Daily Disciplines

Imminent Demise — Ardent Attack 15

Your enemies face certain doom, and you force them to see it and despair.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Psychic, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The attack creates a zone in a close burst 1. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. Bloodied enemies that start their turn within the zone take 10 psychic damage.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Vigorous Offensive — Ardent Attack 15

As battle's thrill overtakes you and you swing your weapon all around, your allies share in the same emotions.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One, two, three, or four creatures
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Effect: For each attack you make with this power, an ally within 5 squares of you gains temporary hit points equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Level 16 Utility Disciplines

Bountiful Life — Ardent Utility 16

As your fortunes improve, so too do those of your allies.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 10
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Whenever you regain hit points, each ally within the zone gains temporary hit points equal to half the hit points you regained.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Re-Form Mind — Ardent Utility 16

You connect the target's thoughts to awaken new talents.

Daily ✦ Psionic
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Requirement: You must be taking a short rest.
Target: One creature
Effect: The target gains training in a skill of your choice until you take an extended rest.

Level 17 At-Will Disciplines

Diamond Defense Assault — Ardent Attack 17

The crystalline motes released by your attack shelter your allies and interfere with your enemies' strikes.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Psychic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage. One ally adjacent to the target marks it until the end of your next turn.
Augment 1
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage. If the target shifts during its next turn, one ally can make a melee basic attack against it as a free action.
Augment 4 (Zone)
Close burst 2
Target: Each enemy in burst
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. While within the zone, allies gain a +4 bonus to all defenses against attacks from outside the zone, and enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Temporal Strike — Ardent Attack 17

Time bends around your foe to protect your allies.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage. The attack creates a zone in a close burst 2. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. While within the zone, you and your allies are insubstantial against opportunity attacks.
Augment 1
Hit: As above, but you and your allies are instead insubstantial against attacks that target Reflex.
Augment 4
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn. The attack creates a zone in a close burst 2. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. While within the zone, you and your allies are insubstantial.

Level 19 Daily Disciplines

Deflecting Disk — Ardent Attack 19

Your attack manifests a shimmering field, which you can move to protect your allies.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you push the target 2 squares.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: You conjure a shimmering disk of force in a square within 5 squares of you. Allies in the disk's square or adjacent to it gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses. You can move the disk 3 squares as part of a move action. When an attack hits an ally adjacent to the disk, you can use an immediate interrupt to grant the ally a +2 bonus to all defenses against that attack. The disk lasts until the end of the encounter or until you use the immediate interrupt.

Shared Vigor — Ardent Attack 19

You create an expanse of glittering energy to reinvigorate your allies.

Daily ✦ Healing, Psionic, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Effect: The attack creates a zone in a close burst 2. The zone lasts until the end of the encounter. When any ally within the zone spends a healing surge, all other allies within the zone regain 1d10 hit points.

Level 22 Utility Disciplines

Insensate Mind — Ardent Utility 22

You influence the mind of your ally so that he or she doesn't feel pain for a time.

Encounter ✦ Psionic
Minor Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Effect: The target gains resistance to all damage equal to one-half your level until the end of your next turn.

Rapid Recovery — Ardent Utility 22

You channel positive thoughts to speed your allies' recovery.

Daily ✦ Healing, Psionic, Zone
Minor Action **Close** burst 1
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. When you move, the zone moves with you, remaining centered on you. Any ally who starts his or her turn within the zone regains 10 hit points.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Level 23 At-Will Disciplines

Perception Shift — Ardent Attack 23

As you strike, you force your victim to attack where your allies are strongest.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Psychic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage. The next time the target makes an attack before the start of your next turn, it attacks a defense of your choice.
Augment 2
Close burst 1
Target: Each enemy you can see in burst
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage. Whenever the target attacks before the end of your next turn, it attacks a defense of your choice.
Augment 6 (Zone)
Close burst 1
Target: Each enemy you can see in burst
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage. Whenever the target attacks before the end of your next turn, it attacks a defense of your choice.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. When any enemy attacks while within the zone, the enemy attacks a defense of your choice.

Revealing Strike — Ardent Attack 23

Your attack highlights the target's weaknesses.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the start of your next turn.
Augment 2
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses and can't benefit from concealment or invisibility until the end of your next turn.
Augment 6
Hit: 4[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target takes a -3 penalty to all defenses until the end of your next turn. In addition, you and each ally adjacent to you gain blindsight 10 until the end of your next turn.

Level 25 Daily Disciplines

Corona of Battle — Ardent Attack 25

Your emotions emanate from you to instill new courage and prowess in your allies.

Daily ✦ Healing, Psionic, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. When you move, the zone moves with you, remaining centered on you. While within the zone, allies gain regeneration 5 and a +2 power bonus to attack rolls, and their attacks deal 1d10 extra damage.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Intellect Bomb Ardent Attack 25

Your attack implants a psychic bomb in your foe's mind.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Psychic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you slide the primary target 1 square.
Effect: Before the end of the encounter, you can make the following secondary attack once, either when the primary target drops to 0 hit points or as a minor action. The secondary attack is a close burst 2 centered on the primary target.
Secondary Target: Each enemy in burst
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the secondary target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 27 At-Will Disciplines

Dismissive Strike Ardent Attack 27

When your attack hits, you dismiss your enemy and leave it to face your friends.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Teleportation, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you teleport the target 5 squares to a square adjacent to an ally.
Augment 2
Close burst 1
Target: Each enemy you can see in burst
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you teleport the target to a square adjacent to an ally who is adjacent to you.
Augment 6 (Zone)
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Effect: The attack creates a zone in a close burst 1. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn. When any enemy enters the zone or starts its turn there, you can teleport that enemy 5 squares as a free action. Any ally who enters the zone or starts his or her turn there can teleport 5 squares as a free action.

Exhilarating Strike Ardent Attack 27

You inspire your allies to strike, and success rewards them with recovery.

At-Will ✦ Augmentable, Psionic
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: One ally in burst
Effect: The target can make a melee basic attack as a free action.
Augment 2
Effect: The target can make a melee basic attack as a free action, with a power bonus to the damage roll equal to your Wisdom modifier. If that attack hits, the target can make a saving throw.
Augment 6
Target: Each ally in burst
Effect: Each target can use a free action either to make a basic attack or to charge, with a power bonus to the damage roll equal to your Wisdom modifier. If a target hits, he or she can make a saving throw.

Level 29 Daily Disciplines

Image of Doom Ardent Attack 29

In the mind of your enemy, you become the image of its doom, and it quails before your attacks.

Daily ✦ Fear, Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 5[W] + Charisma modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses while it can see you, and you can slide it 1 square as a free action when it takes damage from any attack.

Violent Spark Ardent Attack 29

Crimson light shines from your allies' eyes as your comrades make a sudden barrage of attacks.

Daily ✦ Psionic
Standard Action **Close** burst 10
Target: Each ally in burst
Effect: Each target can make an at-will attack as a free action, with a power bonus to the damage roll equal to your Wisdom modifier. If a target misses, he or she can make a saving throw.

Paragon Paths

Psionic Binder

"I am your prison. From me there is no escape."

Prerequisite: Ardent

Though no chains bind them, your enemies become your prisoners. You are a psionic binder, a living prison whose thoughts are as strong as adamantine bonds. When you engage your foes, you redirect their thoughts inward, forming mental walls to constrain their thoughts and root them to the spot. You can keep your enemy imprisoned long enough for your allies to close in and deliver whatever justice the foe deserves.

The aberrant menace is a wily threat, slipping unseen into the mortal world and spreading its corrupting influence to foment unrest and mutation wherever it goes. No matter how many aberrant monsters are destroyed, others spawn to spread wickedness. The only answer is containment. By pinning down the threat, you can destroy it, one monster at a time.

COMMENTARY
JW: This is a reference to the overarching story of psionics we introduce in *Player's Handbook* 3.

By no means are your efforts exclusive to aberrant enemies. Any who stand against you in your single-minded pursuit deserve your dread attention.

Psionic Binder Path Features

Constant Jailer (11th level): Whenever you hit an immobilized creature with a melee or a close attack, that creature can't make saving throws on its next turn against effects that immobilize.

Imprisoning Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack and the attack hits, the target is also restrained (save ends).

Paragon Power Points (11th level): You gain 2 additional power points.

Crushing Walls (16th level): While you are adjacent to an immobilized enemy, that enemy grants combat advantage.

Psionic Binder Disciplines

Binding Strike Psionic Binder Attack 11

Your strike binds the enemy's mind with psionic chains.

Encounter ✦ Augmentable, Psionic, Psychic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is immobilized until the start of your next turn.
Augment 2
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is immobilized until the start of your next turn.

Executioner's Summons Psionic Binder Utility 12

With your enemy pinned down, you call forth the executioner to give it a quick end.

Encounter ✦ Psionic, Teleportation
Move Action **Close** burst 5
Requirement: You must be adjacent to an immobilized enemy.
Target: One ally in burst
Effect: You teleport the target to a square adjacent to an immobilized enemy adjacent to you. Until the end of your next turn, the target gains +2 power bonus to attack rolls against that enemy and a power bonus to damage rolls against it equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Perfect Prison Psionic Binder Attack 20

Your foe's thoughts collapse under the terrifying weight of your attack.

Daily ✦ Fear, Psionic, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Dazed creatures cannot leave the zone. As a move action, you can move the zone 3 squares.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Talaric Strategist

"Your thoughts betray you."

Prerequisite: Ardent

Long ago, when aberrant monsters first spilled into the mortal world, a warrior society was formed to protect the world from the Far Realm's corrupting influence. The society's members recorded their techniques in a volume known as the *Talaric Codex*. In it were the forms and disciplines needed to master their psionic fighting art. In the countless years since its formation, the society has decayed and dissolved. Its monasteries have fallen, and the writings of its adepts have been scattered across the world.

COMMENTARY
JW: We've envisioned psionics as both an ancient (and nearly-forgotten) art practiced in secluded monasteries, and a newly re-emergent technique arising to combat a growing threat to the world.

You have found fragments of writing from this ancient society and learned to focus your psionic powers to give you a tactical advantage in battle. Because your training was haphazard and pieced together from fragments of lore, you improvise where your training is incomplete, drawing from your ardent powers to fill your gaps in knowledge. Still, the teachings you uncovered proved instructive, and you can take charge of nearly any battlefield.

Central to your learning is the ability to read your enemies' intent and turn it against them. You translate the clarity of your vision and your openness to the thoughts and experiences of those around you into a decided tactical advantage. You can warn allies against impending attacks, move companions to adapt to enemy formations, and help your allies scatter when they are faced with devastating magic.

Talaric Strategist Path Features

Anticipatory Action (11th level): When an enemy enters a square adjacent to you, you can spend an action point to take a standard action as an immediate interrupt.

Battle Instinct (11th level): You and allies within 5 squares of you gain a +2 power bonus to initiative checks.

Paragon Power Points (11th level): You gain 2 additional power points.

Tactician's Surge (16th level): Whenever you use your *ardent surge* power, you can slide each ally in the burst 1 square.

Talaric Strategist Disciplines

Anticipation Tactics Talaric Strategist Attack 11

Your tactical intuition places your ally just where he or she needs to be.

Encounter ✦ Augmentable, Psionic
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 3
Trigger: An enemy within 2 squares of you makes a melee attack
Target: One ally in burst
Effect: The target can use a free action to shift 1 square and make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy. That attack deals 1d8 extra damage to the enemy.
Augment 2
Target: One or two allies in burst or you and one ally in burst
Effect: Each target can use a free action to shift 2 squares and make a basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Insightful Command Talaric Strategist Utility 12

You exhort your allies to move to new positions or to defend themselves.

Daily ✦ Psionic
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: Each target can either shift half his or her speed as a free action or gain a +3 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Combined Effort Talaric Strategist Attack 20

Drawing from your allies' perceptions, you discern the best place to strike.

Daily ✦ Psionic, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC. You gain a +1 bonus to the attack roll for each ally within 2 squares of the target.
Hit: 4[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

FEATS

Bolstering Mantle

Prerequisite: Ardent, Ardent Mantle class feature
Benefit: Whenever you spend a healing surge, one ally within the radius of your Ardent Mantle can either gain 5 temporary hit points or make a saving throw.

COMMENTARY
JW: Many of the best feats build on existing class features, making them better in simple ways that are easy to note on your character sheet or power card and thus hard to forget.

Clarified Instincts

Prerequisite: Ardent, Mantle of Clarity class feature
Benefit: The bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks granted by your Mantle of Clarity equals your Wisdom modifier, instead of +2.

Heartening Surge

Prerequisite: Ardent, *ardent surge* power
Benefit: The bonus that your *ardent surge* grants to either defenses or attack rolls increases by 1.

Mantle of Readiness

Prerequisite: Ardent, Ardent Mantle class feature
Benefit: During surprise rounds and the first non-surprise round of any encounter, you and each ally who starts his or her turn within the radius of your Ardent Mantle gain a +2 bonus to speed.

Alacrity of Fortune

Prerequisite: 11th level, ardent, Mantle of Clarity class feature
Benefit: Whenever an ally within the radius of your Ardent Mantle makes a save, he or she can shift 1 square as a free action.

Improved Ardent Surge

Prerequisite: 11th level, ardent, *ardent surge* power
Benefit: The target of your *ardent surge* regains additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Widened Mantle

Prerequisite: 11th level, ardent, Ardent Mantle class feature
Benefit: The radius of your Ardent Mantle increases to 10.

Epic Alacrity

Prerequisite: 21st level, ardent, *ardent alacrity* power
Benefit: Each ally affected by your *ardent alacrity* can shift half his or her speed, instead of 1 square.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power*™ 2, *Draconomicon*™: *Metallic Dragons*, and *Primal Power*™. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Swordmage Essentials: Art of the Blade

By Andy Collins
Illustrations by McLean Kendree

"Valandra, what am I holding?"

"A sword, master."

"Wrong. What am I holding?"

"A perfectly balanced longsword, a testament to eladrin craft."

"Wrong. What am I holding?"

"An implement through which you cast your spells."

"Wrong. What am I holding?"

"I . . . do not know, master."

"You see only the physical. Until you learn to see the blade not as three feet of sharpened steel, but as an indivisible part of your own arcane identity, you will never master the path of the swordmage."

~ Sardis the Ghost Blade
Master of the Emerald Academy

In many ways, the swordmage is a study in contradictions. A lightly armored defender. A front-line fighter who teleports around the battlefield. A melee warrior who wields flashy arcane spells. These contradictions confuse those who don't understand the way of the swordmage, often leading them to believe their blade-wielding opponent weak or vulnerable.

Such fools rarely survive to learn from their error.

The Basics

"Concentrate on the blade across the room. See it in your hand. Feel its sturdy weight. Smell the oiled leather wrapped around the grip. Hear the faint breeze, sliced in two by the sharpened edge. When your mind and body accept that the sword is not there, but here, reality will follow."
—From the first lesson of the Emerald Academy

As a defender, your primary role is to stand between your allies and the monsters who seek to devour them. However, most swordmages have a strong secondary flavor either of striker—if they favor mobility and high-damage attacks—or of controller, if they rely on blasts, ranged attacks, and enemy lockdown effects.

What If You're the Only Defender?

Most of the advice in this article assumes either that you have another defender in the party, or at least a reasonably durable melee combatant (such as a barbarian or warlord). As long as you have some help on the front line, you can afford to teleport around the battlefield, or mark enemies and then move to a new foe.

But if that's not the case—for instance, if your only allies are a wizard, a rogue, and a nonmelee cleric—you must adjust your tactics and power and feat selections. Focus on personal survivability over damage-dealing, choosing feats such as Durable and Toughness and powers such as *dimensional warp* (to rescue a trapped comrade), *host of shields* (to boost your own defenses), and *dimensional vortex* (to redirect an attack from an ally to an enemy). Regardless of power selection, *aegis of shielding* is likely your best aegis choice—all the better to keep your allies alive and kicking.

The Swordmage Aegis

Like other defenders, the swordmage has the ability to mark enemies (primarily by using his or her Swordmage Aegis power), creating an incentive for that foe to attack the swordmage in preference to other characters.

However, the tactics your swordmage uses in deciding who and when to mark, and what to do after you mark, differentiate you from other defenders in many significant ways. In fact, how you choose and use your Swordmage Aegis is a key part of playing an effective swordmage.

Choosing Your Aegis

The first choice that every swordmage must make is which Swordmage Aegis he or she will use: assault, ensnarement, or shielding. All three Swordmage Aegis powers have the same action cost (minor), range (close burst 2), and targets (one creature in burst); all three mark the target; and all three have a secondary effect triggered when the marked target hits with an attack that doesn't include you as a target. The differences come in the secondary effect applied when that hit occurs, so that's where you'll make your decision on which aegis fits you best.

If you just love hitting bad guys with your sword, then you can't go wrong with the *aegis of assault*. Its effect is the most iconically defenderlike—teleport to the marked enemy and make a melee basic attack against it—so it's easy to compare it to other defenders. But getting a free swing at the enemy is only part of the benefit: It also adds significant mobility to your character with the teleportation effect it has. If your swordmage has difficulty keeping up with enemies, or even if you just like to move around the battlefield—*aegis of assault* is perfect for you.

Aegis of ensnarement also brings you back into the fight, but in the opposite way: by teleporting the marked foe to your side. Again, this works well if you have trouble staying with your foes, but in this case you can decide where the ensuing fight occurs. The other half of the aegis effect—granting combat advantage to all attacks made against the marked foe that you teleport—doesn't seem as sexy as a free attack, but that +2 bonus to attack rolls can result in a lot of extra damage from you and your buddies. If you like staying put and buffing your and your allies' attacks, *aegis of ensnarement* is a good choice.

Of the three options, *aegis of shielding* is the least like other defender marking powers, since it doesn't lead (either directly or indirectly) to damaging the marked foe. However, its effect is guaranteed: Neither you nor an ally has to hit the marked foe to gain the benefit of your aegis. You just automatically reduce the incoming damage, which is just as good as healing the ally who got hit. With a good Constitution score, you can expect to reduce the damage by 50% or more. If you're content with a patient, let's-wait-them-out approach to combat (and if you're one of those players who avoids unnecessary dice rolling), then you should select *aegis of shielding*.

Managing Actions

The minor-action cost of using your Swordmage Aegis seems trivial at first glance, but as you gain additional powers and items that use your minor action, you'll

realize the importance of managing even the smallest of your actions.

At the start of every one of your turns, ask yourself if you'll need to use your Swordmage Aegis this turn. It's easy to forget and use your minor action for something else, then realize that to mark a new foe you'll have to spend your move or standard action, or even burn an action point!

Similarly, keep an eye on your immediate action usage. You only get one per round, so if you pick up a power (such as *frost backlash*) or magic item that uses an immediate action, remember that you can't use that option and trigger the secondary effect of your Swordmage Aegis in the same turn.

In both cases, consider using two-sided tokens (one for minor, one for immediate) that remind you when each of these actions have been used. You can use big coins (half-dollars are good, as are any number of large coins of other currencies), but it's less confusing to use something clearly and appropriately marked (for instance, "MINOR USED" and "MINOR AVAILABLE"). When used properly, these simple tokens can head off a lot of rules arguments between you and your Dungeon Master!

Positioning

Unlike most defenders, the swordmage need not stay close to the marked enemy to deliver the full effect of his or her aegis-created mark. In fact, the opposite is true: In many cases, the best place for your swordmage to be after marking a foe is anywhere but adjacent to it!

All three Swordmage Aegis powers require only that you be within 10 squares of the marked target to activate the immediate-action rider effect. In the right circumstances, you can use that range to your benefit by keeping a moderate distance between you and the marked foe. This presents the marked target with a quandary:

✦ **If it stays put and attacks someone else**, it takes a –2 penalty to the attack roll and (if it hits) your aegis effect triggers—either a teleportation effect brings you and the enemy back together, or you reduce the damage dealt to your ally.

✦ **If it comes after you**, its movement likely provokes one or more opportunity attacks from your allies.

This tactic works best against melee-oriented enemies, especially brutes: their low accuracy means the attack penalty from your mark is particularly effective, and their low AC means that your allies' opportunity attacks are more likely to hit.

On the other hand, an enemy with good ranged attack powers doesn't have to chase you to avoid the drawbacks applied by your aegis, so this trick doesn't work well against them. Stick to an in-your-face approach with such enemies.

Timing

Since your marking power is separate from your attacks, you can be choosy about where and when you apply your Swordmage Aegis (unlike the fighter, who can mark only the creature he or she attacks). Here are some questions to ponder when deciding when to use your aegis:

Before or after I move? Another way of thinking about this is, "Do I want to end up next to the marked target, or across the room from it?" Before you leave your starting square, ask yourself if the foe you want to mark is already nearby; if it is, use your aegis before moving away.

Example: Use your *aegis of assault* to mark a zombie hulk 2 squares away, then move across the room to attack the zombie's necromancer master. If the zombie comes after you, he has to weave between the other combatants (potentially provoking opportunity attacks, assuming he can even reach you). If he stays put and smacks your ally, the teleportation effect of *aegis of assault* gets you back in its grill.

Am I charging? This is technically a subset of the previous question, but it's even more restrictive, since charging ends your turn. Spare yourself the disappointment of delivering a devastating charge attack

Swordmage Armor Class

As a defender, you rely on your Armor Class more than any other defense. Among all the defenders, however, you get the worst armor selection—nothing better than leather! So how can you keep up with the fighter and paladin, who are decked out in heavy metal armor and toting shields? But before you start worrying too much, remember the two edges that you have over other defenders.

The first is your Swordmage Warding. Compared to any other character, this is a flat +1 bonus to AC. If you and the fighter both carry greatswords, you have a +1 bonus that he doesn't have. And if you both prefer longswords, your warding's bonus climbs to +3 compared to his heavy shield's +2.

The second is your sizeable Intelligence modifier, which closes the rest of the gap between you and the fighter. (As if you didn't have enough reasons to keep that Intelligence score up . . .).

The table below outlines relative AC values between the four existing defender classes at 1st, 11th, and 21st level. The table assumes your primary ability score starts at 18 and is increased at every available interval, while secondary ability scores start at 16 and are increased twice per tier. The level 11 values include the armor bonus of +3 masterwork armor, while the level 21 values include the armor bonus of +5 masterwork armor. The values don't include any extra bonuses you might derive from feats or other optional effects. Reduce all AC values by 2 if you wield a two-handed weapon.

Class	Level 1	Level 11	Level 21
Fighter	19	29	38
Paladin	20	30	39
Swordmage	19	28	38
Warden	18	27	37

As you can see, the swordmage keeps up nicely with the fighter's AC and stays between the warden and paladin.

If you're looking for ways to improve your AC, consider these options:

Hide Armor: With a Strength and Constitution of 13 or higher, you can increase your AC by 1 point for a single feat. In the paragon tier, Armor Specialization (Hide) adds another point, but requires a 15 Constitution. This path is best for ensnaring swordmages and shielding swordmages (because of their high Constitution scores).

Improve Your Warding: The Improved Swordmage Warding feat increases your AC by a point without adding the skill check penalty that hide armor incurs. With a prerequisite of Dexterity 13, it's best for eladrin, elves, halflings, and other high-Dexterity swordmages. Greater Swordmage Warding, a paragon-tier feat, improves all your defenses by a point. It even stacks with Improved Swordmage Warding, though it requires a minimum 13 score in both Strength and Constitution, making it tough to qualify for both feats without a racial bonus or two.

only to find yourself incapable of marking anyone because your turn is over.

Who's most dangerous? In other words, which of my enemies do I want to attack me instead of my friends? Even if you can build a clever plan of mark, move, attack, then teleport back to deliver a sneaky extra attack, that's not too helpful if the marked target drops your ally before you teleport in. Sometimes it pays to keep it simple and mark the enemy most likely to cause your allies problems. And if you're particularly resistant to an enemy's attacks—whether due to a high defense score, positioning, or resistance to damage—that's all the more reason to draw its attention.

Example: Using the same fight described above, imagine if that necromancer has been unleashing death ray attacks on your comrades throughout the fight while the zombie hulk's nothing more than a meat shield. Marking the zombie becomes a waste of effort—his attacks are meaningless compared to the deadly ranged zaps of the necromancer—so you should move up, mark the necromancer with your aegis, and then start beating on your new target.

Swordmage Builds

Since Strength probably isn't your best score, you likely need either Intelligent Blademaster or Melee Training to keep your melee basic attacks useful. The assault swordmage makes the most melee basic attacks, but the other builds have an even lower Strength score.

Assault Swordmage

"No enemy can escape my blade."

–Terander the Bold

This swordmage build feels the most like a traditional defender because it allows you to attack any enemy with the temerity to strike the your ally. Even though you frequently dive headlong into combat, don't worry too much about your Armor Class unless you're alone on the front line. Grab a greatsword or falchion (or better yet, a fullblade) and crank up your accuracy and damage with feats such as Escalating Assault, Weapon Expertise, and Weapon Focus. If it helps, think of it this way: The lower your AC, the more likely that monsters will ignore your allies and try to kill you instead. Just make sure you have a healer nearby to keep you alive!

Power Selection

Since you likely wield a two-handed weapon, you should favor weapon attacks over implement attacks, since the damage dice are higher for the former. For example, *lightning clash's* 1[W] + Intelligence modifier damage roll becomes 1d10 + Intelligence modifier with a greatsword, so why bother with *crackling burst's* measly 1d8 damage?

Look for powers that you can use in place of the melee basic attack granted by your *aegis of assault*, such as *blastback swipe*, *spikes of agony*, and *binding light*. These can dramatically increase your damage output in early rounds of combat by letting you use multiple encounter powers in the same round without spending action points.

Your first at-will power choice should be *greenflame blade*. It's even better than the fighter's *cleave* for burning through hordes of minions. For your second choice, consider a more specialized attack; since *greenflame blade* is always reasonably useful, having a more circumstantially useful at-will power in your back pocket is handy. I recommend *lightning lure*; even though it breaks the "rule" described above about favoring weapon attacks, it's incredibly handy for getting to a foe who stubbornly remains out of your reach (such as the archer on that 15-foot-high ledge).

Finally, anything that puts your Strength score to use is worth considering: look at *burning blade*, *watchful strike*, and *forceful dismissal* for examples.

Ensnaring Swordmage

"Control the foe and you control the battle. Control the battle and you live to fight again."

–Skamos of the Bloody Blade

While the assault swordmage often feels the most cinematic–teleporting back and forth across the battlefield to deliver powerful sword-swings–you know that you're the best at locking down the battle and ensuring that it's fought on your terms. A good Constitution score is helpful, but not as important for you as for the shielding swordmage, so you can afford to spend a couple of points on another ability score (perhaps to pick up a useful feat).

Power Selection

You'll spend most of combat toe-to-toe with enemies, so pick up melee and close burst powers to avoid provoking unnecessary opportunity attacks.

Since you'll often be drawing monsters to you by using your *aegis of ensnarement*, look for powers that punish monsters for moving away from you on their next turn, such as *crackling burst* and *dragon's teeth*. (*Spikes of agony* isn't a terrible choice, but it relies on a good Strength score to get full effect.)

For at-will powers, *luring strike* is great–first you teleport the foe to you with *aegis of ensnarement*, and then you slide it into position with *luring strike*. If you favor a one-handed weapon, pick up *sword burst*; otherwise *booming blade* is your best second option.

Shielding Swordmage

"Patience and discipline mark the path of survival."
–Ysandra Moonsilver

The least flashy of the three swordmage builds, the shielding swordmage sacrifices offense for party survival. Keep your Constitution as high as you can; every 2-point increase saves another point of damage each time you activate your *aegis of shielding* to protect an ally. The Retributive Shield feat helps you contribute more to offense, and both Closing Advantage and Combat Casting are good if you pick up ranged powers as recommended below.

Power Selection

Unlike the other two builds, you can protect allies without ever returning to the side of the marked enemy attacking them, so you can afford to pick up more ranged attacks than a typical swordmage. I like *lightning lure* as your first at-will choice; other good ranged options include *falcon's mark* (useful even without the *aegis of ensnarement* rider), *lingering lightning*, *dimensional vortex*, and *hell's own blade*.

Don't overdo it; you still need a good array of melee or close burst attack powers for when you're face to face with an enemy. Since you can't follow your foe as easily as other swordmages, look for powers that immobilize, slow, or otherwise hinder movement: *foesnare*, *sloth strike*, and *shadow snake lunge* are good choices. If you wield a longsword or scimitar, plenty of implement powers deal comparable damage to the weapon powers at the same level.

Plenty of powers utilize your high Constitution score, from the humble utility powers *channeling shield* and *unicorn's touch* to the more deadly *chilling blow* and *dimensional vortex*.

Playing Across Builds

It's surprisingly easy to build an effective assault-style swordmage that favors one-handed weapons and close burst implement powers, as well as an ensnaring or shielding swordmage that uses two-handed weapons and melee powers to devastating effect. Don't be afraid to explore options that appear "out of build" for your character—as long as you're having fun and keeping your allies alive, you're doing it right.

Abilities

Your highest ability score should always be Intelligence, with either Strength or Constitution coming in a close second. Depending on your other preferences, your third-best ability score should usually either be the other secondary score (Strength or Constitution) or one of the abilities that improves your Will. The arrays below favor Charisma over Wisdom because of the swordmage's Charisma-based class skills, but you can reverse those if you prefer a good Wisdom score.

The ability score arrays presented below don't include racial adjustments. If your race doesn't have an Intelligence bonus, strongly consider improving your starting Intelligence score to 18 and reducing one or more scores accordingly.

ASSAULT SWORDMAGE ARRAY

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
14	STR Strength	11	DEX Dexterity	8	WIS Wisdom
14	CON Constitution	16	INT Intelligence	12	CHA Charisma

RACE AND BUILD

Race	Recommended Builds
Changeling	Shielding Swordmage
Deva	Ensnaring Swordmage
Dragonborn	Assault Swordmage
Drow	Ensnaring Swordmage
Dwarf	Ensnaring Swordmage
Eladrin	Assault Swordmage
Elf	Assault Swordmage
Genasi	Assault Swordmage
Githzerai	Ensnaring Swordmage
Gnoll	Shielding Swordmage
Gnome	Shielding Swordmage
Goliath	Assault Swordmage
Half-Elf	Ensnaring Swordmage
Half-Orc	Assault Swordmage
Halfling	Shielding Swordmage
Human	Ensnaring Swordmage
Kalashtar	Shielding Swordmage
Longtooth Shifter	Assault Swordmage
Minotaur	Assault Swordmage
Razorclaw Shifter	Ensnaring Swordmage
Revenant	Shielding Swordmage
Shadar-Kai	Ensnaring Swordmage
Tiefling	Ensnaring Swordmage
Warforged	Ensnaring Swordmage

ENSNARING SWORDMAGE ARRAY

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
12	STR Strength	11	DEX Dexterity	8	WIS Wisdom
14	CON Constitution	16	INT Intelligence	14	CHA Charisma

SHIELDING SWORDMAGE ARRAY

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
11	STR Strength	11	DEX Dexterity	8	WIS Wisdom
16	CON Constitution	16	INT Intelligence	14	CHA Charisma

Race

The swordmage thrives on a high Intelligence score, but racial bonuses to Strength and/or Constitution are also valuable. The table on the previous page recommends a build choice for each race based on ability score adjustments as well as racial traits and powers. Of course, you should always take into account your own play preferences when choosing a build—there's no point in picking a "recommended" build if that's not the character you'd enjoy the most.

Swordmage Feats

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Aegis Accuracy

Prerequisite: Swordmage

Benefit: If a target marked by your Swordmage Aegis makes an attack and doesn't include you as a target, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against the marked creature until the end of your next turn.

Aegis Vitality

Prerequisite: Swordmage

Benefit: Whenever a creature marked by your Swordmage Aegis makes an attack that does not include you as a target, you gain 3 temporary hit points.

Increase the temporary hit points to 5 at 11th level, and to 8 at 21st level.

Extended Teleportation

Prerequisite: Swordmage

Benefit: Whenever you teleport with a swordmage or swordmage paragon path power, add 1 to the distance you can teleport.

Vigor of the Blade Adept

Prerequisite: Swordmage

Benefit: While in a swordmage or swordmage paragon path stance, add your Strength modifier to your healing surge value.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Deadly Immobilization

Prerequisite: 11th level, swordmage

Benefit: Whenever you slow or immobilize a target with a swordmage or swordmage paragon path attack power, that power deals extra damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Timely Teleport

Prerequisite: 11th level, swordmage

Benefit: When you use second wind, you can also teleport a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier as a free action.

Swordmage Spells

Encounter Spells

Blades of Fiery Wrath — **Swordmage Attack 3**

The ambient magic of your unsuccessful attack manifests as countless blades of fire that lash out at nearby enemies.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Free Action **Close** burst 1
Trigger: You used a swordmage at-will attack power this turn and did not hit any target with it
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + Intelligence modifier fire damage.

Echoes of Sword Magic — **Swordmage Attack 7**

You tap into the magic of your failed strike to unleash a mighty barrage of thunder.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Thunder
Free Action **Close** blast 3
Trigger: You used a swordmage at-will attack power this turn and did not hit any target with it
Target: Each enemy in blast
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: Hit: 2d6 + Intelligence modifier thunder damage, and the target is marked by your swordmage aegis until the end of your next turn. Marking the target in this way does not remove the mark on another target affected by your swordmage aegis.

Daily Spells

Theft of Alacrity **Swordmage Attack 5**

You steal the speed of your enemy and use it to leap across the dimensions in pursuit.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
Aftereffect: The target is slowed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
Effect: Each time the target rolls a saving throw against this power, you can teleport 5 squares as a free action. You must end this teleportation adjacent to the target.

Dimensional Echoes **Swordmage Attack 9**

As you strike, you create an arcane bond between yourself and your foe, allowing you to slip either of you between narrow gaps between the worlds.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Force, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier force damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you can teleport yourself or the target of this power 1 square as a move action.

Utility Spells

Price of Ensnarement **Swordmage Utility 2**

Your attacks punish those who cannot escape your reach.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, you gain a +2 power bonus to damage rolls against slowed or immobilized targets.
Aegis of Ensnarement: You also gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls against slowed or immobilized targets.

Nimbus of Shielding **Swordmage Utility 6**

You extend a magical ward around nearby allies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, your allies gain a +1 power bonus to AC while adjacent to you.
Aegis of Shielding: Allies instead gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses while adjacent to you.

Armor of Assault **Swordmage Utility 10**

The magic of your vicious attacks temporarily protects you from harm.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, when you hit with a melee weapon attack you gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.
Aegis of Assault: Increase the power bonus to +2.

About the Author

Andy Collins co-designed the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons game, and works for Wizards of the Coast as the Manager of Development and Editing for RPG R&D. His credits stretch back a decade and include *Magic Item Compendium*, *Draconomicon*, *Unearthed Arcana*, and the *Epic Level Handbook*.

Familiar Power

By Arthur Wright
Illustrations by Jorge Lacera

Akara pushed the door open slowly, her senses straining for any sign of arcane wards or other potent traps. Sensing nothing untoward, she lifted her robe with one hand, the other, holding her wand, extended ahead warily. Light from her cantrip bathed the room in gentle, steady light, and her pulse began to quicken. Sensing her excitement, her dragonling Ergo fluttered his wings and chirped softly.

"This is it," she told him. "Cwell's study! At last!"

Books lined the walls, from the floor to the ceiling. A long, carved wooden table—darkwood, she recognized, dominated the center of the room. A smaller writing table sat beyond it, facing the door. The padded chair behind lay on its side, overturned. A few knick knacks and writing implements rested on the desk, undisturbed now for decades. And centered on the desk was a single open tome bound in gold-embossed red leather. Dust mantled everything in the chamber—thick and gray, it muted the light from Akara's spell.

Eagerly, but still with caution, she approached the desk and moved around it to better see the book. Her breath caught in her throat at the thought of all the knowledge it must contain—Cwell's lost secrets . . . hers!

She leaned forward eagerly, and as she did, she saw that this tome was one of many similar books on the shelf near to hand. She righted the chair behind the task, absently brushing the dust from it as she did so, her eyes never leaving the open page. And then she settled in. Ergo, his tail coiled about her neck comfortably, shifted slightly as the two of them bent their heads together over Cwell's tome . . .

Centuries ago, an elf wizard by the name of Cwell created spells that she used in conjunction with her familiar, a dragonling named Cava. Enamored of her friend and companion, she recognized that the link between familiar and master was one that could be used in unique ways. She began work on a treatise that she never greatly publicized—it focused on spells and techniques that allowed arcane casters to tap new reservoirs of power through this connection to the familiar. In addition to her tome's use as a spellbook, her work included notes and instructions on how to communicate and relate to a familiar on a different level than most wizards did at that time.

Hundreds of years passed, and Cwell continued to grow in power, and she continued to add to her spellbook. She took on apprentices from time to time over her career. Many were not wizards at all, but those who practiced other arcane disciplines. They sought Cwell because she had arcane insights that few of her peers possessed—insights that were accessible to any who tapped the arcane power source.

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She taught many of her students her theories on the nature of familiars. One such pupil was a sorcerer named Magnus. To Cwell, he fit the mold of all sorcerers—wild, unpredictable, and obsessed with power. She taught him anyway, hoping that she could shape his path in some way. The sorcerer took to her theories easily, although he proved unwilling to master her specific spells. But he recognized the wisdom of Cwell's teachings. After spending several years with her, he left to make his own way in the world—and to spread Cwell's theories to others willing to learn.

Throughout her life, Cwell continued to teach. As she grew older, she focused more and more of her time trying to understand and improve the link between master and familiar. She created many disciples of these theories in her later years, but few enough felt the urge to share the power that her ideas were never widely known or understood. Cwell was also an open teacher. Her students occasionally surprised her with new insights of their own, which she happily incorporated in her work and recorded in her books of magic.

Eventually, Cwell's last student left her, and she decided that the time had come for her to seek new experiences of her own. Taking only her favorite spellbook and Cava, she departed the mortal realm, and has not been seen since. Her tower and workshop were left unattended, and eventually, knowledge of their existence passed from the world.

Enough of her students took up her mantle that Cwell's ideas have proliferated. This modest number of her disciples continued to teach the philosophy that familiars should be treated with respect, not as slaves, and that only then could the power between the two become fully realized. Many times, these former students would record their own new spells or theories, and circulate these books along with portions of Cwell's own research. These books, while each unique, offer the reader a basic education in the principles of complete familiar binding, although the rest of the contents might differ. In the present day, hundreds of different such tomes exist.

Cwell's followers came to refer to her theories as "Cavalian" magic, after their master's familiar. Those arcane wielders that adhere the closest to the teachings within the book also use dragonlings as their familiars. The new uses of familiars spread to non-practitioners, as well. For a brief time at the height of Cwell's popularity, merchants began to capture and sell what they called "Cavalian dragons" as pets. These small flying lizards were not actual dragonling familiars—since they weren't spirits. This did not seem to stop people from buying them. They became popular pets for a time, since many thought them good luck.

The teachings of Cwell have since dimmed in popularity, although the books based on them have been circulated across the world and beyond. Some who find them dream of finding Cwell's original home and to unearth still more of her secrets and research.

As for Magnus, he too continued to teach—primarily sorcerers, but others as well. He showed his own students how to further shape and modify their magic with the aid of their familiars. He also developed his own new spells, although those are best left for another time...

Wizard Powers

When "Active Familiar" appears as a header in a power description, the associated entry describes an additional effect that applies if you have a familiar in the active state.

Level 1 Encounter Spells

Conduit of Ice **Wizard Attack 1**

You turn your enemy into a conduit to an ice storm from the Elemental Chaos.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Cold, Implement, Zone
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier cold damage, and you create a zone of sudden cold in a burst 2 centered on the target until the end of your next turn. The zone moves with the target. The zone is difficult terrain, and any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 5 cold damage.
Active Familiar: While your familiar is in the zone, it knocks prone any enemy that ends its turn in the zone.

Level 2 Utility Spells

Familiar Harrier **Wizard Utility 2**

You send your familiar in to keep your opponent off balance.

At-Will ✦ Arcane, Teleportation
Move Action
Effect: Teleport your familiar 10 squares, and until the end of your next turn your familiar can flank with you or your allies. When an attack hits a creature flanked by the familiar, that creature cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

Level 3 Encounter Spells

Melting Pool — **Wizard Attack 3**

You create an extradimensional pool of acid beneath your enemies' feet.

Encounter ✦ Acid, Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier acid damage.
Active Familiar: Any enemy hit by this attack must spend an extra square of movement to leave its square while within 3 squares of your familiar until the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Spells

Familiar's Call — **Wizard Utility 6**

You teleport yourself to where your familiar is.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Teleportation
Move Action **Personal**
Effect: You teleport up to 20 squares to the square occupied by your familiar and your familiar enters passive mode.

Level 7 Encounter Spells

Repelling Sphere — **Wizard Attack 7**

You repulse your enemies with an expending sphere of force.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Force, Implement
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Active Familiar: You can center this burst on your familiar instead of on you.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d4 + Intelligence modifier force damage, and you push the target to a space outside the burst.

Level 10 Utility Spells

Familiar Shape — **Wizard Utility 10**

You assume the shape of a creature that resembles your familiar.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Polymorph
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume a form identical to your familiar until the end of the encounter and, for the same duration, can change back or forth between this and your natural form as a minor action. In this form, you gain the movement modes, speed, and special senses of your familiar but cannot make attacks.

Level 13 Encounter Spells

Arcane Chastisement — **Wizard Attack 13**

Your retributive strike more than teaches the enemy not to harm you, it compels it.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 10
Trigger: An enemy hits you or an ally
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier psychic damage, and the target cannot attack the creature it targeted with the triggering attack until the end of your next turn.
Active Familiar: Until the end of your next turn, the target cannot attack your familiar and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against creatures adjacent to your familiar.

Level 16 Utility Spells

Circle of Protection — **Wizard Utility 16**

You weave a circle of protective runes that guard your allies and can draw power from your familiar for greater strength.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 20 squares
Effect: The burst creatures a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. While within the zone, you and your allies have resistance to all damage equal to your Intelligence modifier. Enemies must spend 2 extra squares of movement to enter the zone. When you use this power, make the following attack.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Active Familiar: You gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll if your familiar is in the burst.
Hit: You push the target 2 squares away from the burst's origin square to a square outside the zone. You cannot push the target into hindering terrain.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Level 17 Encounter Spells

Thunderous Transformation — **Wizard Attack 17**

You translate your enemy's physical form into a monstrous peal of thunder before it reincorporates nearby.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Teleportation, Thunder, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier thunder damage, and any creature within 2 squares of the target takes 10 thunder damage and falls prone. Then you teleport the target 5 squares.

Active Familiar: You can teleport the target up to 20 squares to a space within 3 squares of your familiar.

Level 22 Utility Spells

Dire Familiar **Wizard Utility 22**
Incantation

Your familiar expands in size rapidly, becoming a threat to your enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Polymorph
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Requirement: Your familiar must be in a square it could occupy as a Medium creature.
Target: Your familiar
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, your familiar becomes a Medium creature, gains a hit point total equal to your bloodied value, and can flank with you or your allies. While in this form, when any enemy adjacent to the familiar is hit by an attack, you may use a free action to have the familiar knock that enemy prone, push it 1 square, or shift 1 square and slides that enemy into the square the familiar left.

Level 23 Encounter Spells

Crushing Necrotism **Wizard Attack 23**

You encase your foe in tightening necrotic energy, which washes over its allies when the enemy struggles free.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + Intelligence modifier necrotic damage, and the target is slowed and grants combat advantage until the end of the target's next turn. At the end of the target's next turn, any enemy within 2 squares of the target takes 10 necrotic damage and you push that enemy 2 squares from the target.
Active Familiar: At the end of the target's next turn, you also push any enemy within 2 squares of your familiar 2 squares from your familiar.

Level 27 Encounter Spells

Mind-Numbing Presence **Wizard Attack 27**

You surround your foe with a field that dampens thought.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic, Zone
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Intelligence modifier psychic damage, and a burst 3 centered on the target becomes a zone of numbed thought until the end of your next turn. This zone moves with the target. Any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 10 psychic damage, and any enemy that enters or leaves the zone becomes dazed until the end of your next turn.
Active Familiar: When an enemy takes damage from the zone or becomes dazed by the zone, your familiar can shift 3 squares as a free action.

Magic Items for Familiars

Familiar items are a subset of wondrous items that can be used only to enhance a familiar. A familiar is treated as having a single item slot, which can be used only to equip familiar items. Unless otherwise stated, a familiar can't normally carry or wield a magic item.

Lucky Charm **Level 12**

Your familiar is blessed by good luck to get out of dangerous situations.

Item Slot: Familiar 13,000 gp
Property: When an attack misses you or your familiar, your familiar can shift 1 square as a free action.

Charm of Protection **Level 8**

Your familiar is protected by the charm almost as if it has a destiny of its own.

Item Slot: Familiar 3,400 gp
Power (Encounter) ✦ Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* An attack hits your familiar. *Effect:* Your familiar gains a +4 power bonus to AC and Reflex until the end of your next turn.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Active Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisite: Arcane Familiar feat
Benefit: When you take a move action, you can also move your familiar its speed or shift it 1 square.

Cast Afar the Spirit [Familiar]

Prerequisite: Arcane Familiar feat
Benefit: When you switch your familiar into active mode, you can teleport it up to 5 squares.

Persistent Spirit [Familiar]

Prerequisite: Arcane Familiar feat
Benefit: When your familiar is destroyed, an echo of its spirit remains. Treat your familiar as in its active state until the end of your next turn, at which time the spirit fades away.

Swift Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisite: Arcane Familiar feat
Benefit: You can switch your familiar between passive mode and active mode with a free action on your turn instead of a minor action. You can do so only once per turn.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Sight of the Familiar [Familiar]

Prerequisite: 11th level, Arcane Familiar feat
Benefit: While your familiar is in passive mode, you can see through its eyes, benefiting from its special senses. In addition, after you return your familiar to passive mode from active mode, it can show you one image it saw during that period in active mode.

Space-Bending Spirit [Familiar]

Prerequisite: 11th level, Arcane Familiar feat
Benefit: Your familiar gains teleport 2 as an additional movement mode.

Rituals

Familiar Mount

Your familiar grows large enough to carry you to your destination.
Level: 4 **Component Cost:** 25 gp
Category: Exploration **Market Price:** 175 gp
Time: 5 minutes **Key Skill:** Arcana (no check)
Duration: 12 hours

Your familiar grows to Large size and can accommodate you as a rider, and it is in active mode for the duration. You can end the ritual by returning the familiar to passive mode with a minor action. If the familiar takes damage equal to 5 + one-half your level or more, it returns to its normal size and to passive mode.

Familiars

Specter — **Familiar**

You have touched the Shadowfell and lived to speak of it. You even brought back a souvenir.

Senses Darkvision
Speed Fly 6 (hover)
Constant Benefits
You gain a +4 bonus to monster knowledge checks to identify undead creatures.
You gain resist 5 necrotic. If already have resist necrotic, increase the resistance by 2.
Active Benefits
Incorporeal: The specter has phasing and does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Undead: The specter is immune to necrotic damage.

Least Air Elemental — **Familiar**

A wisp of air from the Elemental Chaos does your bidding on the mortal plane.

Speed Fly 6 (hover)
Constant Benefits
You take half normal damage from falling.
Active Benefits
Elemental Servant: As a minor action, you cause the familiar to pick up, move, or manipulate an unattended object weighing 20 pounds or less and carry it up to 5 squares.

Tiny Gelatinous Cube — **Familiar**

This palm-sized ooze tickles you with its weak acid.

Speed 2
Constant Benefits
You gain resist 5 acid. If you already have resist acid, increase the resistance by 2.
Active Benefits
Cleaning: The familiar consumes nonliving organic objects that it touches at a rate of 1 pound of material per round.
Transparent: The familiar is invisible.

Least Earth Elemental — **Familiar**

A small creature made of earth and stone lumbers along as you command.

Speed 2, **Burrow** 6
Constant Benefits
When an attack knocks you prone, you can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone.
Active Benefits
Tremorsense: You and the least earth elemental can clearly see creatures and objects in the same square as the least earth elemental, even if they are invisible, obscured, or outside line of effect, but they and the least earth elemental must be in contact with the ground or the same substance, such as water or a web.

About the Author

Arthur Wright is a 37-year-old father of three living in upstate New York, and he is an avid gamer. When not playing *Lord of the Rings Online*, he is playing 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons® and spending time with his family. He loves reality TV and wants to someday appear on the show *Survivor*.

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More Toys for Assassins

By Mike Mearls
Illustration by Patrick McEvoy

The assassin character class rolled out in September, and almost immediately we saw a call for more stuff. "Feats for the shadar-kai!" cried the forums. "Where are our ki focuses?" shouted the blogs.

Well, here they are. Normally, this sort of article opens with a bit of flavor. Forget about that! Here are some more toys for your assassin. Have fun!

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Horns of the Shadow Reaper

Prerequisite: Minotaur, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: When you charge and use your *goring charge* racial power you and target has at least one of your assassin's shrouds on it, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack roll and, after resolving the attack, you can shift half your speed as part of the charge.

Hunter in the Gloom

Prerequisite: Shadar-kai, assassin, *shadow jaunt* racial power

Benefit: While you are insubstantial due to your *shadow jaunt* power, any weapon attacks you make against AC instead are made against the target's Reflex.

Initiate of Three Masks

Prerequisite: Changeling, assassin

Benefit: You can use a Stealth check in place of Bluff with your *changeling trick* racial power. In addition, if that check succeeds, the target cannot make opportunity attacks against you until the end of your next turn.

Keeper of the Black Flame

Prerequisite: Drow, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: When you hit a target that has at least one of your shrouds on it with your *darkfire* racial power, the target is subject to an additional shroud.

Maw of the Hungry Killer

Prerequisite: Gnoll, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: When you reduce a creature that has at least one of your shrouds on it to 0 hit points or fewer, you gain temporary hit points equal to 5 + the number of shrouds on the target. If you invoked your shrouds on the attack that reduced the creature to 0 hit points, you can also teleport to a space adjacent to your nearest ally within 10 squares.

Mind of Flawless Sight

Prerequisite: Kalashtar, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: If a creature has at least one of your shrouds on it, you ignore the –2 penalties for concealment or cover on your attack rolls against that creature.

Resolve of the Iron Terminator

Prerequisite: Warforged, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: You gain resist to attacks from any creature with your shrouds on it equal to the number of shrouds on the creature.

Seeker of the Devouring Dark

Prerequisite: Drow, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: When a creature with at least one of your shrouds on it leaves the area of your *cloud of darkness*, it takes damage from your shrouds as if you had hit it with an attack, and your shrouds vanish from the target.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Fade into Shadow

Prerequisite: 11th level, assassin, *shadow step* power

Benefit: When you become bloodied, you may use your *shadow step* as an immediate reaction.

Grave Step

Prerequisite: 11th level, assassin, *shadow step* power

Benefit: If you reduce a creature to 0 hit points or fewer during your turn, you can use *shadow step* as a minor action during that turn without needing to begin or end the teleport adjacent to a creature.

Killer in the Crowd

Prerequisite: 11th level, assassin

Benefit: Your enemies do not grant cover to your targets. You gain cover from your enemies.

Shadow's Inexorable Grasp

Prerequisite: 11th level, assassin, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: When you are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, any creature within 10 squares of you with at least one of your shrouds on it takes damage from your assassin's shrouds as if you had missed it with an attack, and your shrouds vanish from the target.

Epic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 21st level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Soul in Shadow

Prerequisite: 21st level, assassin

Benefit: You gain concealment against all creatures that are 5 or more squares away from you.

Walker Through Shadows

Prerequisite: 21st level, assassin

Benefit: While you are insubstantial, you also gain phasing.

Multiclass Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Shadow Initiate [Multiclass Assassin]

Prerequisite: Dex 13

Benefit: You gain training in the Stealth skill. Twice per encounter, you can use the *assassin's shroud* power. In addition, you can wield assassin implements.

Acolyte of the Veil [Multiclass Assassin]

Prerequisite: Dex 13

Benefit: You gain training in the Acrobatics or Stealth skill. Once per encounter, you can use the *shadow step* power. In addition, you can wield assassin implements.

Ki Focus

A ki focus is an implement that certain classes use as a focus for their inner magical energy, known as their ki. A ki focus might take the form of a training manual, a scroll of ancient secrets, or a blunt training weapon. To use a ki focus, you must first attune yourself to it. Some characters study their ki focus to attune themselves to it. Others meditate with it or wield it as they practice their fighting techniques. Once you have attuned yourself to a ki focus, you must either wear or hold it to use it as an implement.

When you attune yourself to a ki focus, you draw on magic within it to shape your ki. This attunement is temporary, and it fades away if you attune yourself to a different ki focus or if you die. The ki focus that you're attuned to occupies your ki focus item slot.

To attune yourself to a ki focus, you must have the item on your person during a short or an extended rest. Whenever you take a rest, you can attune yourself to a ki focus in your possession, but you can be attuned to only one ki focus at a time. Also, only one creature at a time can be attuned to a particular ki focus. Once you attune yourself to a ki focus, no one else can attune to it until you are no longer attuned to it.

If you can use a ki focus as an implement, you can add its enhancement bonus to the attack rolls and the

damage rolls of implement powers from the class (and its associated paragon paths) that allows you to use a ki focus, and you can use its properties and powers. Otherwise, you gain no benefit from a ki focus.

Being able to use a ki focus as an implement means you can also use it with your weapon attacks. You can add its enhancement bonus to the attack rolls and the damage rolls of weapon attacks you make using a weapon with which you're proficient. However, you must choose to use the enhancement bonus, properties, and powers of the ki focus, rather than the weapon you're wielding, or vice versa. You can't use both when you use a power.

Emerald Flame Ki Focus — Level 2+

A flickering, yellow flame dances within this green gem's facets, hinting at the magic that can be unleashed only by one with the focus needed to study the flame's secrets.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp

Implement (Ki Focus)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Fire): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* You are hit by an attack. *Effect:* Any enemy adjacent to you takes 5 fire damage. Then you shift 2 squares.
Level 12 or 17: 10 fire damage.
Level 22 or 27: 15 fire damage.

Final Sleep Ki Focus — Level 3+

This small manual's plain, black leather covers contain illustrations of the vulnerable points on a variety of creatures. The contents change each time you open the book, and as you flip from page to page you never seem to reach the book's end.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Implement (Ki Focus)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d12 damage per plus
Property: Whenever you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Hawk's Talon Ki Focus — Level 4+

This small, blunt dagger is made of a soft, malleable metal. It shivers and flutters in your grasp, like a captive bird. When you practice with it, you unlock the secret of the swooping hawk's tactics.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Implement (Ki Focus)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d8 damage per plus
Property: Whenever you charge, you gain a bonus to any Athletics checks made to jump as part of that charge equal to 2 + this item's enhancement bonus.
Power (Daily): Standard Action. Charge an enemy. Your movement during this charge does not provoke opportunity attacks, and you can use an at-will attack power that will target only one enemy in place of a melee basic attack at the end of the charge.

Iron Body Ki Focus — Level 5+

This set of weights consists of rune-scribed chunks of lead laced together with leather straps. When tied to your feet and hands, you can perform the exercises needed to master the iron body technique.

Lvl 5	+1	1,000 gp	Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp
Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Implement (Ki Focus)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d10 damage per plus
Property: If you hit an opponent with an attack using this ki focus, you gain resistance to all of that target's attacks equal to 2 + this implement's enhancement bonus until the end of your next turn.

Magic Ki Focus — Level 1+

This ancient scroll looks as if it is about to crumble to dust, but the magic within its text keeps its form intact. By studying the writings, you focus your ki into a potent weapon.

Lvl 1	+1	360 gp	Lvl 16	+4	45,000 gp
Lvl 6	+2	1,800 gp	Lvl 21	+5	225,000 gp
Lvl 11	+3	9,000 gp	Lvl 26	+6	1,125,000 gp

Implement (Ki Focus)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Rain of Hammers Ki Focus — Level 3+

This small, wooden box holds a pair of leaden hammers and a tiny drum. By beating the hammers against the drum, you sharpen your ki, accustoming your arms to deliver a steady stream of powerful attacks.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

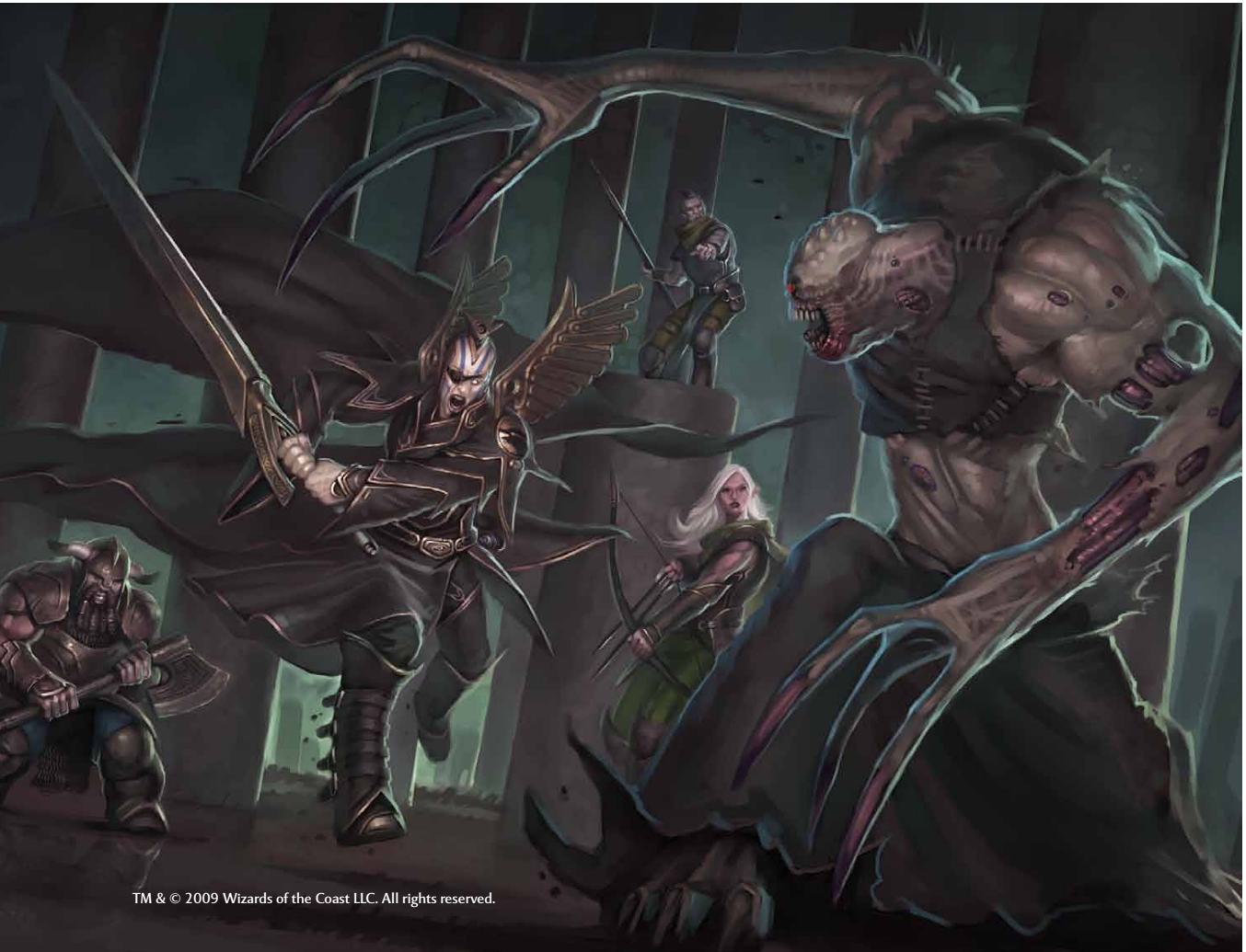
Implement (Ki Focus)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: Whenever you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, one enemy adjacent to you takes damage equal to 2 + this focus's enhancement bonus damage.
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Make an at-will attack against an enemy that you already hit with an attack during this turn.

About the Author

Mike Mearls is the Lead Designer for the Dungeons & Dragons® roleplaying game. His recent credits include *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell* and *Player's Handbook® 2*.

Avenger Essentials: Divine Retribution

By Rodney Thompson
Illustrations by Eric Belisle



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"My sword is an instrument of the Raven Queen's will. I am her reaper— her will given flesh. What I do, I do at the whim of powers greater than I can understand. All are eventually called into the Raven Queen's embrace; some simply require my blade to speed them along."

—From the journal of Vargas, the White Assassin

The gods have many devotees, from commoners to the paladins who spread their holy word with sword and shield. Yet where many divine heroes serve their gods as leaders, healers, military commanders, and the masterminds of great plans, few are as single-minded and zealous in the pursuit of their faith as the avenger. An avenger's idiom is simple: Defeat enemies of the faith and punish them for their transgressions.

An avenger is nothing if not focused, and a character's mechanics and story are built on this focus. As an adventurer, the avenger is one of the most story-driven classes, and although each avenger might differ in his or her particular motivations, most avengers are compelled by their faith, as well as their interactions with other characters in the world.

The Basics

"My words and deeds are molded by the will of my goddess. The oaths I swear—those that declare the enemies of my faith—bind my foes with the power of the Raven Queen. Woe unto those who hear the words of my oath, for their time to fall into the arms of my god is nigh."

—From the journal of Vargas, the White Assassin

The avenger, as the divine striker, is tasked with finding enemies, isolating them from their allies, and then meting out swift punishment for being an enemy of the faith. Unlike other strikers, the avenger does not fulfill its role through damage-boosting means, but rather through increased accuracy and occasional damage spikes. To put it in terms more in line with the world of Dungeons & Dragons®, an avenger's deadliness lies not in strength of arms, but rather in the divine guidance that causes his or her weapons to strike true. The patron deity of an avenger alters fate in such a way that the avenger's attacks against sworn enemies strike vital areas, slipping through layers of protection to inflict grievous wounds against all odds. Many view an avenger as having the guiding hand of his or her deity behind every attack.

Divine Assassins

In many ways, the avenger is the spiritual successor to the holy slayer from 2nd Edition's Al-Qadim® campaign setting. As in Al-Qadim, the avenger is a servant of divine powers whose primary role is to slay those who are enemies of the faith. For some avengers, this means becoming something of a "divine assassin" who works not to spread the word of his or her patron deity, but to ruthlessly eliminate all who oppose his or her views. One way in which this "divine assassin" theme can manifest itself is in skill selection. As with other such characters, skills such as Acrobatics, Athletics, and Stealth can be of great value to avengers. Since the avenger needs to isolate its enemies to be most successful, waiting until a target is alone before striking is a great tactic. Skills such as those noted above help an avenger sneak into an enemy's home, shadow an enemy until it is alone, or find a good spot from which to launch an ambush.

Oath of Enmity

The core of the avenger class is its *oath of enmity* power. When an avenger uses this power, he or she designates a single target as the focus of his or her attacks. Much like a ranger or a warlock, this power serves as target designation, but, unlike those other classes, an avenger absolutely must deal with the target of their *oath of enmity* to the exclusion of all others to reach his or her expected potential as a striker. This leads to avengers being single-minded in their pursuit of any enemy. The other restriction on *oath of enmity* requires the avenger to move the target away from its allies, since the power does not work when other enemies are adjacent to the enemy. This enforces not only a particular combat style, but also helps reinforce the avenger's idiom: Seek out enemies, wait until they are vulnerable, and then strike and continue to do so until the enemy is dead (or otherwise subdued).

Accuracy: Thanks to *oath of enmity*, the avenger reaches his or her expected striker damage potential through accuracy, not a raw damage boost. This ensures that, over the course of an encounter, the total damage output is close to that of other striker classes thanks to the avenger hitting on rounds when other strikers miss. With this in mind, this accuracy boost provides you with a bit more freedom in building your character. Feats such as Weapon Expertise, which for many classes can make a big difference in their effectiveness, aren't as essential for an avenger thanks to the inherent boost in accuracy provided by *oath of enmity*. Instead, you can use those feat slots for things such as damage-boosting feats, feats that trigger effects on critical hits, or feats to flesh out your character's skills and personality.

Critical Hits: Likewise, an avenger is typically going to score a critical hit twice as often as other characters. This means that feats, items, and other game elements that trigger off scoring a critical hit are twice as valuable, and it means that an avenger's damage output can spike up twice as often. To take advantage of this, consider hunting or crafting weapons with the high crit quality and the *vicious* enchantment, or the *bloodthirsty* enchantment (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 65). The latter has the advantage of also providing a damage boost against bloodied enemies, and as a striker you should try to take bloodied enemies down as quickly as possible. At paragon tier, taking the Devastating Critical feat means that, on a crit, you not only maximize damage but add large crit dice, two high crit dice, and a d10 ... and your bonus crit damage only gets bigger from there.

Channel Divinity

For the avenger, the Channel Divinity options for the class fall strictly into the offense category. They are going to be used primarily to deal damage to an opponent—and one is applicable only when fighting

When Not to Swear Your Oath

Though the core of the avenger's effectiveness is the *oath of enmity*, sometimes you don't want to use the power right away. The power has two big drawbacks you need to take into account: You can have no other enemies adjacent to you, and you can have your *oath of enmity* on only one enemy at a time. In fights with lots of enemies, you need to pick your *oath of enmity* target carefully, because if your *oath of enmity* target's allies suddenly swarm you, it might take you a while before you can take advantage of your *oath of enmity*. Similarly, you should be cautious about putting your *oath of enmity* target on enemies that show a lot of mobility or the ability to teleport. Though an avenger can punish a foe for moving away, once your *oath of enmity* target has escaped your grasp, you could end up stuck without your core mechanic. If your avenger doesn't have a lot of abilities that immobilize or slow targets, consider taking the *refocus enmity* utility power at 2nd level. The power makes a great safety net for when your *oath of enmity* target escapes you and keeps you from being at reduced effectiveness.

undead, meaning that, in most encounters, you're probably going to be using *divine guidance*.

One of the best parts of *divine guidance* is that, for a single attack roll, one of your allies can feel how good it is to be you. As your ally launches his or her attack, your deity favors that ally with same accuracy boon you normally receive. Typically, you want to save your *divine guidance* for when one of your allies is going to do something significant, whether that means immobilizing a monster as it tries to escape or putting out big damage when using a daily power. Additionally, when one of your allies spends an action point to make an extra attack and misses, consider using *divine guidance* then so that he or she hasn't wasted an action point on a miss.

If you are fighting undead, *abjure undead* can be an extremely nasty power. Its damage output is above that of most daily powers at its level, and it is a great way to pull an enemy over to you while you stay safely off to one side. The *abjure undead* power makes a great opening salvo against an undead creature that you make your *oath of enmity* target, since it allows you to move into a position from which other enemies have a hard time reaching you. Then you pull your target to you, ensuring that on subsequent rounds you can take advantage of your *oath of enmity*. If you have an action point to spend and are fighting undead, you should consider moving to an isolated position as a move action, firing off *abjure undead* to pull your target to you as a standard action, putting your *oath of enmity* on the target as a minor action, and then using the action point to gain another standard action to attack.

Raven Queen's Blessing: If you're a follower of the Raven Queen, consider taking the Raven Queen's Blessing feat for an extra Channel Divinity option. Though it does require you to reduce a target to 0 hit points, your role as a striker (and slightly more frequent damage spikes from critical hits) means that you'll have more opportunities to use the power than a cleric, paladin, or invoker. It's a great choice for avengers looking to add a little more healing to their adventuring party.

Choosing Your Deity

Though you don't have many restrictions to your character based on the deity you serve, this choice has a big effect on who your character is. Usually, you'll pick a god who fits with how you want to roleplay your character.

On the rules side of things, you can take a look at the Channel Divinity feats for the different deities, and at the domains from *Divine Power* you can access as a follower of each deity. These allow you to have a little more of the deity's theme come through in your powers.

Avengers of ...

Since the avenger is such an aggressive and focused divine class, deciding what drives and motivates your avenger can almost certainly depend on the edicts of your faith. Below are some suggestions for what might motivate an avenger devoted to the various core deities.

Avandra: You are the silent protector of travelers, exacting Avandra's vengeance upon those who would prey upon explorers, traders, and other adventurers. You cannot abide tyrants, slavers, or those who impede the journey, and Avandra has granted you her blessing in meting out justice against anyone that stands in the way of progress.

Bahamut: Above all else you value justice, and Bahamut's will guides your blade to bring justice to those who deserve it. You ensure that anyone that harms or oppresses others reaps the fruit of the wicked deeds they do, confident that the Platinum Dragon wants ill works made right.

Corellon: You are a sworn enemy of the followers of Lolth, and you know that many who do evil are doing so in her name—whether they know it or not. Though your true enmity is for the Spider Queen, you believe that all who serve evil are aiding Lolth, if sometimes indirectly, and must be stopped—by violent means, if necessary.

Erathis: For you, those who sow chaos in the middle of an organized, peaceful society are threatening to tear down civilization. You seek out and dispense punishment to those who would permit the chaos of the wilds to overthrow civilization by weakening its defenders.

Ioun: Anyone who would destroy knowledge, whether through carelessness or in the hopes of suppressing it, is an enemy of your faith. Worse yet are those who would keep secret knowledge for themselves while leaving others in ignorance; rulers that forbid their followers to learn to read and write, for example, are begging to be brought low by your blade.

Kord: As the servant of the Lord of Battle, you seek out those who make worthy foes and test their mettle. However, those who are wanton with their strength must be stopped, for although prowess is to be respected it must be used with honor.

Melora: Those who defile the natural world declare themselves your enemy with every act. You are dedicated to protecting the world from both wanton defilers as well as creatures that should not be. You set the world right by dispensing the will of Melora.

Moradin: For you, Moradin's creed is to protect your friends, family, and allies with no mercy for those who would threaten them. Although revenge for wrongdoing is acceptable, you are compelled to preemptively rid the world of those who might become a threat to your people in the future.

Pelor: As a servant of Pelor, you know that true justice comes from liberating the oppressed and seeing to it that those who would make others suffer do not live long enough to continue their evil ways. You are the guard that stands against the rise of evil, and you must slay those who spread darkness before they can harm others.

The Raven Queen: You are Death's reaper—the hand of the Raven Queen. By her grace and your will, those who seek to evade the natural order of things—such as those who seek vile undeath—must be ushered on to the Raven Queen's embrace. Death is the domain of your mistress; if it comes, it is her will that your blade brings it.

Sehanine: You are sworn to prevent those who hurl themselves zealously after a cause, no matter how good, from bringing harm to the world. Though you declare yourself devoted, zealots and tyrants end up rending the world in their struggles, no matter how well intentioned. It is your duty to stop those atrocities from occurring before they can begin.

Avenger Builds

For the avenger, much of your build support is built right into your powers. Though each build has a class feature that addresses an aspect of being an avenger of that build, for the most part your build is most apparent when using powers that feature rider mechanics for your build.

An avenger's build choice affects the secondary ability score that you use, and likely most of your power choices. The main choices you face are described here.

- **Weapon or Holy Symbol:** Though primarily a concern in power choice, the build you choose should also reflect well on whether you choose to take any implement powers. The commanding avenger and the isolating avenger both have class features that trigger off you being in the middle of melee (likely making a lot of weapon attacks); alternatively, the pursuing avenger doesn't mind if his or her *oath of enmity* target escapes a bit, which makes using implement powers from range more viable.
- **Isolation:** As mentioned above, one of your biggest choices in selecting a build is to decide whether you want to isolate your enemies (both from their allies and yours) or whether you want to wade into the thick of combat. Both the commanding and isolating avengers like being around other allies and enemies (respectively), whereas the pursuing avenger is going to want to pull his or her enemies off to one side and keep them there.
- **Damage or Utility:** Two of the avenger's builds provide class features that boost damage: the commanding avenger and the isolating avenger. The pursuing avenger's class feature adds utility but does not add to your damage.
- **Skills:** Since the avenger's secondary ability score is tied to its class feature, your aptitude with skills likely also hangs on your build choice. If you want to make the best use of Dexterity-based skills, such as Acrobatics, Stealth, or (by spending a feat) Thievery, then the pursuing avenger is for you. Otherwise, the other two builds most benefit Intelligence-based skills such as Religion or (through spending feats) skills such as Arcana and History.

Commanding Avenger

"Move forward! Kord has given us his blessing; let us not waste it."

–Arvando Terasi, avenger of Kord

Introduced in *Divine Power*, the commanding avenger benefits most from having allies surrounding his or her enemies. As with most avengers, the commanding avenger spends the bulk of his or her time in melee, but it is to his or her advantage to maneuver enemies adjacent to multiple allies. As a result, the commanding avenger ends up being a bit more like a leader than other avengers, at least in the sense that he or she provides target designation by simple virtue of putting an *oath of enmity* on a target.

Parties with a commanding avenger should focus their melee attacks on the target of the avenger's *oath of enmity*. The commanding avenger also enjoys the close proximity of a defender, which any striker can attest is frequently a good thing. Similarly, a commanding avenger is a rogue's best friend, since the two of them flanking an enemy means a damage boost for each striker.

Power Selection

Choosing powers for a commanding avenger can be pretty simple. Your avenger receives the most benefit out of powers that are specifically designed for the build (those that feature a Censure of Unity rider effect), but you might want to consider other general categories of powers. Any power that allows you to maneuver an enemy into a more advantageous position, whether through teleportation or forced movement, means that you have a better chance of moving the enemy close to your allies and gaining your damage boost.

The other type of power you should look for is a power that provides a bonus to your allies against your target, or those that penalize your opponent's defenses (such as *lethal intercession* in *Divine Power*, page 15). Since your allies are already going to be adjacent to your enemy (under optimal circumstances), chances are they are attacking your target, and these powers can boost their effectiveness.

Commanding Avenger Feats

A commanding avenger should take feats that help boost melee damage output, but you should also consider taking a pair of other feats. Divine Distraction (*Divine Power*, page 131) grants a bonus to your allies' damage against your *oath of enmity* target when you are adjacent to the enemy. The other is a paragon tier feat, Vexing Flanker (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 193), which causes enemies you flank to grant combat advantage to your allies. Both of these feats benefit not only your allies in melee combat, but also your ranged attackers, meaning you provide accuracy and damage boosts to your entire party.

Isolating Avenger

"Your friends cannot save you. Repent now, for in moments I will speed you on to your afterlife."

–Lirra Moonglow, avenger of Sehanine

An isolating avenger is similar to a commanding avenger in many ways. However, whereas the commanding avenger wants to push enemies close to his or her allies, the isolating avenger tries to deter other enemies from interfering in his or her attacks. The isolating avenger doesn't mind being near multiple enemies, since the Censure of Retribution class feature can provide extra damage when you hit your *oath of enmity* target. Like all avengers, the isolating avenger wants to keep other enemies away to benefit from *oath of enmity*, but the isolating avenger has one of the best deterrents.

An isolating avenger doesn't have an inherent way of keeping enemies from escaping, so much of his or her ability to isolate an enemy comes from powers that reposition the opponent plus the natural barriers found on the battlefield, such as walls, difficult terrain, and so on. Since the isolating avenger doesn't need to worry about being attacked by multiple enemies as much, he or she probably wants to try to pin enemies against walls and other blocking terrain and let other enemies boost his or her damage if they try to pry him or her off of an *oath of enmity* target.

Power Selection

As mentioned above, the isolating avenger needs to move enemies into a position from which they have difficulty escaping. Powers that teleport are best at this, but powers that slide provide the kind of positioning needed to pin enemies. Additionally, any powers that punish an enemy for moving away are a good way to make up for the lack of a class feature that allows the isolating avenger to follow his or her target.

Additionally, the isolating avenger should consider taking powers (especially utility powers) that provide the ability to spend healing surges, true healing, and temporary hit points. Though the isolating avenger

gains a damage boost when hit by other enemies (something the avenger might invite if only to take down his or her *oath of enmity* target more quickly), eventually all those attacks take their toll. Late in the fight, leaders might be out of healing abilities, and the avenger might have to ensure that he or she can stay up after taking an encounter's worth of damage from multiple enemies.

Teleportation

Powers that teleport are extremely beneficial for any avenger. Not only does the teleportation element put the avenger in a position from which he or she can use the *oath of enmity* benefit every round, some powers teleport both the avenger and his or her target. However, you have a lot of other ways to gain the ability to teleport beyond avenger powers. Magic items such as the *robe of contingency* (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 49) can be of great help, because they provide not only the ability to move into a better position but also give avengers some much-needed healing if they have taken a lot of damage. Although shifting is good, teleportation is the absolute best way for an avenger to ensure that he or she is gaining the benefit of *oath of enmity* and doing his or her job as a striker.

Pursuing Avenger

"Escape is not an option, my friend. Wherever you go, I will be but one step behind you. Run to the ends of the world if you must, and I will be there haunting your footsteps. Hide in the depths of the earth, and I will be waiting with the torch. No one can escape the eyes of the gods."

–Vargas, the White Assassin

The pursuing avenger has the benefit of being the hardest build from which to escape. A pursuing avenger wants to pull enemies aside, daring them to try to flee and stacking up damage on those who attempt it. The pursuing avenger also has a lot of ways (thanks to his or her powers) of getting a target alone and keeping them there.

For the most part, the pursuing avenger wants to try to move enemies away from the fray, because he or she has no deterrents against an enemy's attack, and this build gains no real benefit from pushing an enemy into allies (other than the obvious result of focusing multiple ally's attacks on that target). You can use the physical space between your avenger and the rest of his or her enemies as a buffer, and when possible pull enemies back behind the party's defender so that the defender acts as a wall between him or her and other enemies. When an enemy does flee, the pursuing avenger should have some powers handy to move to this *oath of enmity* target quickly to take advantage of the damage boost from Censure of Pursuit.

Power Selection

The Censure of Pursuit riders on a lot of powers are the best indicators of powers that serve this build best. Powers such as *sequestering strike* include not only teleports for you and your *oath of enmity* target, but an increasingly long-range teleport based on a secondary ability score, which makes getting your enemies alone for some one-on-one time all that much easier. Powers that include a kind of movement in them are great for the pursuing avenger, and they enable the avenger to take advantage of the damage boost provided by Censure of Pursuit even while dazed or slowed.

A pursuing avenger also wants to look for powers that punish enemies for moving away directly. For example, the *bond of foresight* power (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 37) punishes an enemy for moving away by letting you make an opportunity attack no matter how the enemy goes about it. Pursuing avengers should also consider taking the Melee Training (Wisdom) feat (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 187) so that they have a better chance of punishing their enemies as they move away, with more accurate opportunity attacks rather than having to wait until the following turn.

Abilities

The best ability scores for avengers affect not only their attacks and riders, but also fit well with useful skills.

After you choose the ability scores most closely associated with your build, you might want to assign your remaining scores to fit in with the themes of your deity. You can look at the skills listed in the "Your Deity and You" section of *Divine Power* (page 124) and choose scores that match those skills.

Wisdom

Above all, Wisdom is going to be the most important skill for the avenger. It governs attack rolls and damage bonuses, and important skills such as Perception (no avenger likes to be caught unaware). Once again, the avenger's increased accuracy due to *oath of enmity* somewhat mitigates the need for maxing out your Wisdom score, giving you the option to have a slightly lower Wisdom score and then offsetting that with Weapon Expertise.

Dexterity

If you choose the Censure of Pursuit class feature, Dexterity is your second most important ability score, behind Wisdom. Your Dexterity bonus determines the bonus damage you deal when an enemy moves away from you, and it governs skills such as Acrobatics and Stealth that can be beneficial for an avenger. Additionally, Dexterity can help boost your AC and Reflex, protecting you from attacks while you are engaged in melee combat without requiring you to wear any armor other than cloth.

Intelligence

For the commanding and isolating avenger, Intelligence can act as an important secondary ability score. Censure of Retribution directly ties its bonus damage to Intelligence, though the commanding avenger uses Intelligence only in power riders. Like Dexterity, a high Intelligence can boost your AC and Reflex and protect you from harm, and it also unlocks interesting multiclass combinations (described below).

Race

Races with a Wisdom bonus are all very suitable for avengers. Depending on your chosen build, a variety of other races with Intelligence or Dexterity bonuses work moderately well. The following table offers a few suggestions on the best races for the various avenger builds. You also should take into account the race's powers and other benefits when choosing a race, as well as the general idea behind your character and the conceits of the campaign you are joining.

Monk Multiclassing

The monk makes a great choice for the pursuing avenger looking to multiclass. Not only are monk attack powers based on Dexterity (of which the pursuing avenger should have a decent score), but one of the monk's builds has Wisdom as a secondary ability score, which matches up with the avenger's primary ability score. Since many monk powers also include a mobility element to them, they might make a nice choice for an avenger looking to add a bit of spice to his or her power selection.

Swordmage Multiclassing

The swordmage is a natural fit for the avenger with a decent Intelligence who is looking to multiclass. Not only is it an Intelligence primary class that uses a weapon for many of its attacks, the swordmage's powers include a number of control effects (such as immobilization or forced movement) and teleport effects, both of which are great additions to the swordmage's arsenal.

Wizard Multiclassing

Like the swordmage, the wizard is a good choice for multiclassing as an Intelligence secondary avenger thanks to its primary ability score. However, one of the best aspects of multiclassing into wizard is that the wizard has a large number of utility powers that are good choices for the avenger, like *invisibility* and *dimension door*. Not Only does the teleportation element put the avenger in a position from which he or she can use the *oath of enmity* benefit every round, some powers teleport both the avenger and his or her target. However, you have a lot of other ways to gain the ability to teleport beyond avenger powers. Magic items such as the *robe of contingency* (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 49) can be of great help, because they provide not only the ability to move into a better position but also give avengers some much-needed healing if they have taken a lot of damage. Although shifting is good, teleportation is the absolute best way for an avenger to ensure that he or she is gaining the benefit of *oath of enmity* and doing his or her job as a striker.

Avenger Build	Best Races
Commanding/Isolating	Changeling, Deva*, Dwarf, Eladrin, Genasi, Githzerai, Gnome, Human, Shadar-Kai, Shifter, Tiefling, Wilden
Pursuing	Changeling, Deva, Drow, Dwarf, Eladrin, Elf*, Githzerai*, Half-Orc, Halfling, Human, Revenant, Shadar-Kai, Shifter*, Wilden

*Matches both primary and secondary ability score

Domains

Introduced in *Divine Power*, domains alter at-will prayers and give more Channel Divinity options. These options have several factors to process: the deity you worship, the Channel Divinity power, and the powers the domain alters. If you need a decent starting place (beyond the roleplaying options you receive from the domain), search the domain feats for at-wills you've chosen. Here's a quick reference list.

Versatile Master

Though the half-elf isn't an optimal race for avengers, their ability to pick up an at-will power from another class (first as an encounter power, then as an at-will with the Versatile Master feat from *Player's Handbook 2*) can make them a tempting race for avengers. An avenger with *thunder wave* as an at-will (particularly an Intelligence secondary build avenger) can approach a group of enemies, blast all but his or her *oath of enmity* target back a great distance, and then start wailing on the *oath of enmity* target. This example shows a good combination made better by the half-elf race.

Of course, you don't *have* to take all the options from a domain or constrain yourself to only one. For example, you might take the Power of Vengeance domain feat (*Divine Power*, page 122) from the vengeance domain, and then take the Death Knell divinity feat (*Divine Power*, page 111) from the death domain.

ASSOCIATED AVENGER POWERS FOR DOMAINS

Power	Domains
Bond of censure*	**Destruction, justice, luck, moon, sea, tyranny, undeath, winter**
Bond of retribution	**Fate, strife**
Leading strike	**Civilization, freedom, hope, knowledge, protection**
Overwhelming Strike	**Change, earth, madness, poison, skill, storm, strength, torment, trickery, wilderness**
Radiant vengeance	**Arcana, creation, death, life, love, sun, vengeance**

*This power appears in ***Divine Power***.

Avenger Feats

Heroic Tier Feats

Avenging Resolution

Prerequisites: Avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: When you attack a target of your *oath of enmity* with a weapon attack, treat all rolls of a 1 or 2 on the damage dice as though the result were a 3 on the die.

Distant Vengeance

Prerequisites: Avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: As long as you are within 10 squares of your *oath of enmity* target and no other enemies are adjacent to you, you gain the benefit of your *oath of enmity* on all ranged basic attacks against your *oath of enmity* target.

Oath of Urgency

Prerequisites: Avenger, Channel Divinity class feature, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: You gain the Channel Divinity power *oath of urgency*.

Channel Divinity: Oath of Urgency — **Feat Power**

You utter a prayer of need, calling upon your god to bring swift vengeance upon a new foe.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: The current target of your *oath of enmity* is no longer the target of that power. You regain your *oath of enmity* power and use it as a free action immediately.

Unyielding Pursuit

Prerequisites: Avenger

Benefit: If you end a run action adjacent to a target of your *oath of enmity*, you take no penalty on attack rolls against your *oath of enmity* target from that run action.

Paragon Tier Feats

Arbiter of Justice

Prerequisites: 11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: You deal +2 damage against bloodied targets. Additionally, whenever an ally bloodies or reduces your *oath of enmity* target to 0 hit points, you may act as though you had bloodied or reduced the target to 0 hit points.

Exposing Oath

Prerequisites: 11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: While a creature is your *oath of enmity* target, your attacks ignore any resist radiant or resist necrotic the target has.

Halo of Isolation

Prerequisites: 11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: While adjacent to your *oath of enmity* target, all other enemies treat squares adjacent to you as difficult terrain.

Painful Oath

Prerequisites: 11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: The first time you hit your *oath of enmity* target each turn, you deal extra radiant and necrotic damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Epic Tier Feats

Halo of Tethering

Prerequisites: 21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: When an *oath of enmity* target that is adjacent to you shifts, you can shift 1 square into a square it vacated.

Halo of Warding

Prerequisites: 21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: While you are adjacent to your *oath of enmity* target, you can make an opportunity attack against any other enemy that moves into a square adjacent to you, provided the enemy does not shift or is not moved into that square by teleportation or forced movement.

Hand of Divine Guidance

Prerequisites: 21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: You score critical hits on a roll of 19–20 against your *oath of enmity* target.

Vengeful Declaration

Prerequisites: 21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: You can use *oath of enmity* as a free action on your turn.

HEROIC TIER FEATS

Avenger Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Avenging Resolution	Avenger, *oath of enmity*	Treat damage dice results of 1 or 2 as a result of 3
Distant Vengeance	Avenger, *oath of enmity*	Gain *oath of enmity* benefit with ranged basic attacks
Oath of Urgency	Avenger, Channel Divinity, *oath of enmity*	Change the target of your *oath of enmity*
Unyielding Pursuit	Avenger	Negate penalties of run action against oath target

PARAGON TIER FEATS

Avenger Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Arbiter of Justice	11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	+2 damage against bloodied creatures and gain benefits if any oath target is bloodied or killed
Exposing Oath	11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Ignore resist radiant or resist necrotic of your oath target
Halo of Isolation	11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Squares adjacent to you can become difficult terrain
Painful Oath	11th level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Deal extra radiant and necrotic damage to oath target

EPIC TIER FEATS

Avenger Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Halo of Tethering	21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Shift into square oath target shifted out of
Halo of Warding	21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Make opportunity attack against non-oath enemies that move next to you
Hand of Divine Guidance	21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Score crits on 19–20 against oath target
Vengeful Declaration	21st level, avenger, *oath of enmity*	Use *oath of enmity* as free action on your turn

About the Author

Rodney Thompson is a game designer at Wizards of the Coast. His previous design credits include the *Star Wars® Roleplaying Game* Saga Edition, the *Clone Wars Campaign Guide* supplement, and the *Scum and Villainy* supplement.

Class Acts: Avenger Prayers

By Rodney Thompson
Illustration by Patrick McEvoy

Avengers can sometimes encounter difficulties in attacking the targets of their oath of enmity. In some cases, their oath of enmity target flees or is otherwise removed from the battlefield, making it impossible to continue attacking them, while in other cases the avenger is adjacent to multiple enemies. The following powers are designed to help avengers continue to take advantage of their *oath of enmity* even under circumstances where they would not normally be able to do so.

Level 1 At-Will Prayers

Avenging Shackles — Avenger Attack 1

Your prayers call for your enemy to stumble before you, and your enemy is bathed in radiant light that sears like fire.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage. If the target is your *oath of enmity* target, the target is also slowed until the end of your next turn.
Level 21: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage.
Special: You can use this power as a ranged basic attack.

Level 1 Encounter Prayers

Seeking Brand — Avenger Attack 1

You refuse to let your enemies escape you, scorching a brand upon your sworn foe that is drawn to the power of your oath.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Effect: If the target is your *oath of enmity* target, you can roll twice on this attack and use either result.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 1 Daily Prayers

Steelsworn Oath — Avenger Attack 1

As you swing your weapon at your enemy, you infuse the attack with the power of divine retribution, and the power lingers on your foe.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: Before the attack, the target becomes the target of your *oath of enmity*, replacing your current *oath of enmity* target if you have one.
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.

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Level 3 Encounter Prayers

Relentless Stride — Avenger Attack 3

You perform miracles and walk through the air to ensure that your enemy does not escape your vengeance.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Teleportation, Weapon
Immediate Reaction **Melee** weapon
Trigger: Your *oath of enmity* target ends its turn within 5 squares of you but is not adjacent to you
Censure of Pursuit: The triggering enemy must be within 10 squares of you instead of 5.
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: Before the attack, you teleport to a square adjacent to the target.
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.

Level 5 Daily Prayers

Glaring Admonition — Avenger Attack 5

Your oath binds itself to your foe, serving as a reproach that calls out for divine retribution.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: Your *oath of enmity* target
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses against divine attack powers (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses against divine attack powers until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when you use an avenger implement attack power against the target of your *oath of enmity*, you can benefit from your *oath of enmity* as though you were making a melee attack and the target were adjacent to you.

Level 7 Encounter Prayers

No Respite — Avenger Attack 7

You force away the chaff that is your enemy's allies with divine energy, leaving no one to interfere with your pursuit of vengeance.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Effect: Before making this attack, you push each enemy adjacent to you other than your *oath of enmity* target 3 squares, but not into a square that causes the creature to make a saving throw or take damage or another negative effect.
Target: Your *oath of enmity* target
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.

Level 9 Daily Prayers

Blade of Repulsion — Avenger Attack 9

You guarantee that none who approach you can get in the way of your sworn oath.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when any enemy that is not your *oath of enmity* target ends its turn adjacent to you, you can push that enemy 3 squares as a free action. In addition, if the target of your *oath of enmity* ends its turn adjacent to you, it is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Level 13 Encounter Prayers

Lifedrinking Covenant — Avenger Attack 13

You bind your enemy's spirit in a pact with the forces of death, promising to send it to the afterlife one way or another.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Effect: If the target is your *oath of enmity* target, you can roll twice on this attack and use either result.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier necrotic damage, and until the end of your next turn the target takes 5 necrotic damage for each square it moves.

Level 15 Daily Prayers

Oath of the Many — Avenger Attack 15

Your enmity knows no limits, and as you strike your foe you focus your vengeance upon it.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: Before the attack, the target becomes the target of your *oath of enmity*. If this causes you to have more than one *oath of enmity* target, you do not regain the use of your *oath of enmity* power until all your *oath of enmity* targets drop to 0 hit points, or until the end of the encounter.
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Level 17 Encounter Prayers

Haunting Step — Avenger Attack 17

You let nothing stand in the way of reaching your enemies, especially when they threaten your allies.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Teleportation, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** Weapon
Effect: Before making this attack, shift up to your speed +2.
Censure of Unity: If your *oath of enmity* target is within 10 squares of you and adjacent to one of your allies, teleport into any unoccupied square adjacent to the target instead of shifting.
Target: Your *oath of enmity* target
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.

Level 19 Daily Prayers

Radiant Beckoning — Avenger Attack 19

You draw upon the radiant energy of your deity, infusing your sworn oaths with power that sears your enemy and draws it into your attack.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: Your *oath of enmity* target
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 5d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and you pull the target 5 squares to a square adjacent to you.
Miss: Half damage and you pull the target 2 squares.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when you use an avenger implement attack power against your *oath of enmity* target, you can benefit from your *oath of enmity* as though you were making a melee attack and the target were adjacent to you.

Level 23 Encounter Prayers

Sacred Arena — Avenger Attack 23

You banish your enemies from your presence, keeping behind only the target of your sacred enmity.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Teleportation, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Effect: Before making this attack, you can teleport each enemy adjacent to you other than your *oath of enmity* target 5 squares to a square not adjacent to you, and not to a square that causes the creature to make a saving throw or take damage or another negative effect.
Target: Your *oath of enmity* target
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.

Level 25 Daily Prayers

Wings of Pursuit — Avenger Attack 25

You manifest wings of pure divine power, which draw you ever closer to those you have sworn to defeat.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Effect: Before making this attack, you can fly up to your speed.
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 5[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, on any of your turns that you start without your *oath of enmity* target adjacent to you, you can use the following action:
Move Action **Personal**
Effect: Fly up to your speed to a square adjacent to your *oath of enmity* target, and your *oath of enmity* target grants you combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Level 27 Encounter Prayers

Covenant of Repentance — Avenger Attack 27

You demand penitence from those who have flouted the will of your god, and you harm those who refuse to repent.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Effect: If the target is your *oath of enmity* target, you can roll twice on this attack and use either result.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier necrotic damage, and you knock the target prone. If the target is not prone at the end of its next turn, it takes 10 extra necrotic damage.

Level 29 Daily Prayers

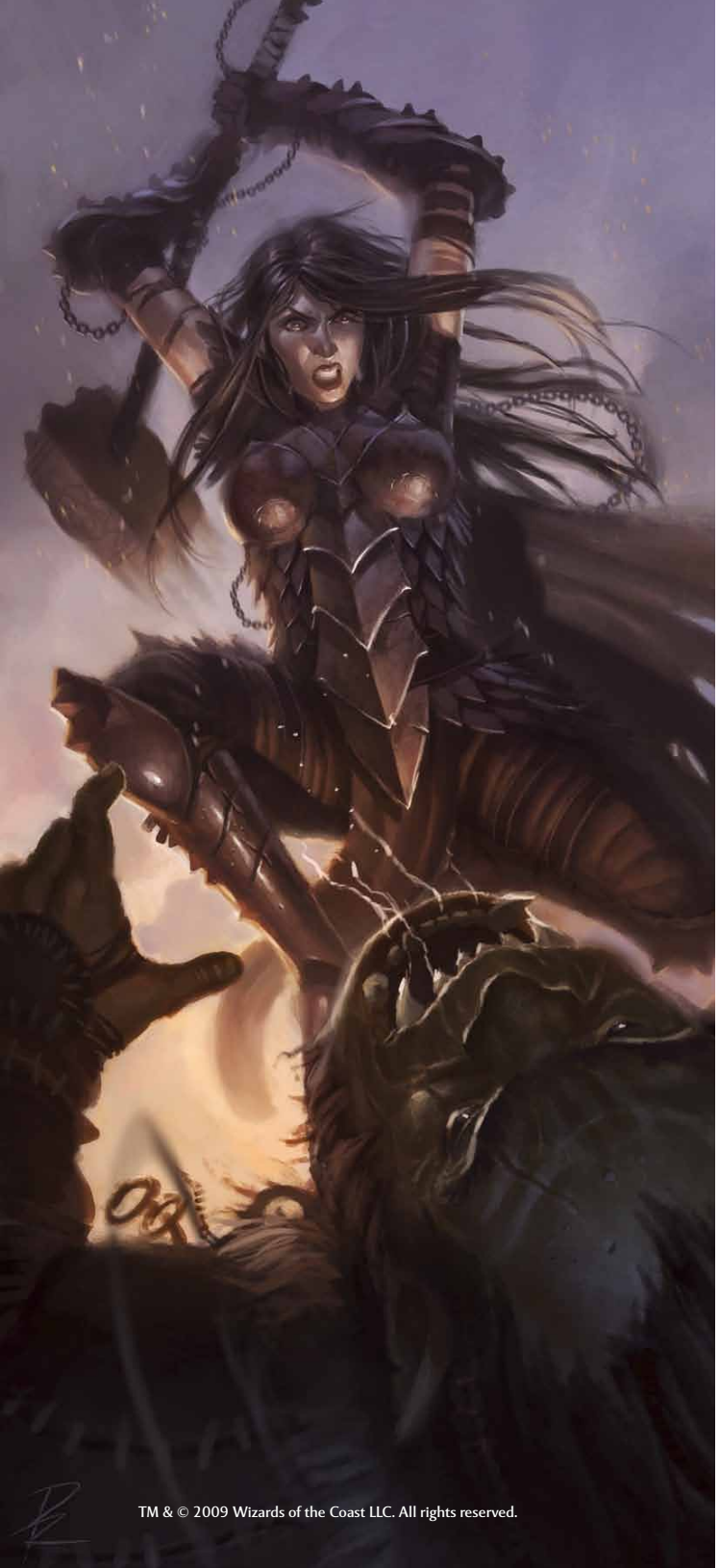
Brand on the Soul — Avenger Attack 29

You utter an oath sworn so deeply that the words of your prayer are seared into the very fabric of your enemy's spirit.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: Before the attack, the target becomes the target of your *oath of enmity*. If this causes you to have more than one *oath of enmity* target, you do not regain the use of your *oath of enmity* power until all your *oath of enmity* targets drop to 0 hit points, or until the end of the encounter.
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 6[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage + 5 damage.

About the Author

Rodney Thompson is a developer and designer at Wizards of the Coast. His previous design credits include the *Star Wars® Roleplaying Game* Saga Edition, the *Clone Wars CampaignGuide* supplement, and the *Scum and Villainy* supplement.



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Class Acts: Fighter

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Illustration by David Rapoza

The School of Twenty Blades is a small, unassuming building nestled on the edge of the civilized world. Most passersby mistake it for a private residence or the workshop. The old man who sits on the building's front stoop looks unassuming. Few would guess that he is Crelden Varn, one of the greatest living weapon masters.

Crelden has taught dozens of young warriors the art of battle. His ethos is simple. A warrior who relies too heavily on a single weapon is doomed to eventually match his technique against a foe who can exploit his style's weakness. No single school of martial arts is perfect. Thus, he seeks to teach his students a broad range of tactics. He encourages them to carry several weapons and use the right one based on the situation.

Crelden's teachings form the basis of the most flexible approach to the fighting arts. His students learn a variety of stances to react to an enemy's tactics. They incorporate ranged weapons into their strategy, engaging an enemy from a distance before closing to attack. They turn a shield into an offensive weapon, sending an enemy's attacks careening into their other foes. Most importantly, they learn simple attack techniques that, when matched with different weapons, produce wildly different results. A fighter who studies the School of Twenty Blades is unmatched in his ability to react to his foe's tactics.

Heroic Tier Feats

Weapon Master

Prerequisite: Weapon Focus, Weapon Expertise

Benefit: You gain the benefits of Weapon Focus and Weapon Expertise with all weapons you are proficient with.

Level 1 At-Will Exploits

Resolute Shield — **Fighter Attack 1**

As you slash into your foe, you pull your shield into a defensive position between the two of you, guaranteeing that it absorbs at least some of your enemy's attack.

At-Will ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be using a shield
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you gain resist equal to your Constitution modifier against the target's attacks until the end of your next turn.
Increase damage to 2[W] + your Strength modifier at 21st level.

Managing Multiple Stances

This article introduces a number of stances that you can use each encounter. A good way to track your stances is to either print power cards for them or note each on an index card. Arrange them in a stack, with your current stance face up. When you swap stances, simply put your new stance on top and put the other at the bottom of the stack.

Weapon Master's Strike — Fighter Attack 1

You shift your tactics to match your weapon's strengths, maximizing its advantages to gain an edge against your foe.

At-Will ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: Before making this attack, you may sheathe a weapon and draw a different one as a free action.
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage. In addition, the target takes an additional effect based on the weapon you wield.
Axe: The target takes extra damage equal to your Constitution modifier.
Mace: You slide the target 1 square.
Heavy Blade: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +1 power bonus to AC against the target's attacks.
Spear or Polearm: Until the end of your next turn, the target provokes opportunity attacks from you when it shifts

Level 2 Utility Exploits

Battle Fury Stance — Fighter Utility 2

You throw your full weight into each attack, ruining your defenses but scoring a crippling blow with each strike.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to damage rolls with weapon attacks but suffer a -2 penalty to AC. The bonus damage from this stance increase to +4 at 11th level and +6 at 21st level.
Special: This stance ends when you spend a healing surge. You can end this stance as a free action during your turn but not on the same turn that you activated it.

Level 3 Encounter Exploits

Deflecting Shield — Fighter Attack 3

As you hammer your foe with an attack, you move your shield to deflect its counterattack.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be using a shield
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. The next time the target attacks you before the end of your next turn, one other enemy adjacent to you suffers damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Level 6 Utility Exploits

Bodyguard's Stance — Fighter Utility 6

You stand poised, ready to block attacks made against your allies with your shield or, failing that, your body.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Whenever an ally adjacent to you takes damage, as a free action, reduce that damage by 5. You must use this ability anytime you are able. When you do so, you take 5 damage, which cannot be reduce of redirected in anyway.
Special: You can end this stance as a free action during your turn.

Level 7 Encounter Exploits

Weapon Master's Gambit — Fighter Attack 7

As a master of many weapons, you use this simple attack form as the starting point for expressing your weapon's nature.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: Before making this attack, you may sheathe a weapon and draw a different one as a free action.
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. In addition, the target takes an additional effect based on the weapon you wield.
Axe: Up to 2 creatures adjacent to the target take damage equal to your Constitution modifier.
Mace: The target is knocked prone.
Heavy Blade: You gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your next turn.
Spear or Polearm: You slide the target 2 squares and shift 2 squares to a square adjacent to the target.

Level 10 Utility Exploits

Martial Redoubt — Fighter Utility 10

You sink into a broad fighting stance, whirling your weapon in an arc that disrupts your foe's line of sight and allows you to knock aside your enemy's attacks. While you protect your foes, this stance forces you to compromise your own defenses.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, your allies have cover when adjacent to you. Your enemies gain combat advantage against you.
Special: You can end this stance as a free action during your turn.

Level 13 Encounter Exploits

Entrapping Shield — Fighter Attack 13

You tangle your shield with your foe as you lunge to attack. While it struggles to escape, you use your shield to deflect attacks against you into it.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be using a shield
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn, each time you are attacked the target suffers damage equal to your Strength modifier if it is adjacent to you. This benefit does not apply to attacks that target both you and your target.

Level 16 Utility Exploits

Warding Shield — Fighter Utility 16

You twist and move in your current space, your shield held ready, as you prepare to block your foe's attacks.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Stance
Move Action **Personal**
Requirement: You must be using a shield
Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses and are immune to forced movement.
Special: This stance ends if you move during your turn. You can end this stance as a free action during your turn.

Level 17 Encounter Exploits

Weapon Master's Tactics — Fighter Attack 17

You shift to a new weapon, catching your enemy off guard as your tactics make a dramatic transformation.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: Before making this attack, you may sheathe a weapon and draw a different one as a free action.
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Axe: All enemies adjacent to you and the target take damage equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier.
Mace: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Heavy Blade: The target's attack penalty due to your mark increases to –4 until the end of your next turn.
Spear or Polearm: You slide the target to any other square adjacent to you.

Level 22 Utility Exploits

Martial Supremacy — Fighter Utility 22

Your fighting expertise and experience allow you to use your most familiar attacks with unmatched accuracy.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, whenever you use a fighter at-will attack power or basic attack that has the weapon keyword, you may reroll the attack roll. Use the second roll, even if it's lower.
Special: This stance ends if you spend a healing surge. You can end this stance as a free action during your turn.

Level 23 Encounter Exploits

Battering Shield — Fighter Attack 23

You hack into your foe, leaving it defenseless for a critical moment. As another foe closes to attack, you ready your shield to deflect the attack into your target.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be using a shield
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn. The next time an attack hits you before the end of your next turn, the target is also hit by that attack if it is adjacent to you. This benefit does not apply to attacks that target both you and your target.

About the Author

Stephen Radney-MacFarland is the Lead Designer for the Dungeons & Dragons® roleplaying game. His recent credits include *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell*™ and *Player's Handbook® 2*.

Class Acts: Warlock

Secrets of the Blackest Night

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustrations by Patrick McEvoy

Warlocks are dangerous. Entering a pact is no common event. The entity often requires something in exchange. What a warlock offers varies from individual to individual, but the idea that the warlock would offer something precious enough to gain vast power, no matter how just the cause, suggests a willingness to do anything to obtain goals. If a warlock can be tempted to offer up his or her soul for a few spells, what else might that warlock do for even greater power?

The Daughters of Blackest Night exemplify the peril all warlocks face when dabbling with occult entities. The coven formed and vanished centuries ago, first appearing in the world when the black witch Eraea assembled likeminded arcanists to join her efforts to dislodge Asmodeus as the Nine Hells' ruler. She forged a pact with Glasya, daughter of Asmodeus, but she entered the agreement to exploit the infernal power offered and demonstrated no particular loyalty to her mistress. Her grudge against Asmodeus was not prompted by her mistress, but rather it came from Eraea's own desire for power as well as her wish to strike at the gods whom she despised.

Eraea's mad designs won her many enemies and eventually Asmodeus's inquisitors cornered the coven and burned them alive, but the mark this warlock left upon the world lingers still in the wicked spells she designed and the ambition she once held.

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The Blasphemous Libram

Eraea's coven took the name Daughters of Blackest Night to suggest they stood as far from the shining gods as they could. They performed many terrible deeds during their time, but their most heinous accomplishment was authoring the *Blasphemous Lexicon*, a book filled with records of the Daughters' pacts with Glasya, how others might make such pacts, and the powers and dark rituals one can gain from so doing. The book survived the purge that ended the coven, surfacing now and then to cause trouble to those who examine its pages.

Those who study the *Blasphemous Libram* and use its power risk their very souls. The book covets soul energy, and those who die with the tome in their possession find passage to the Shadowfell closed to them as they enter the Nine Hells to endure torments for all time. Enemies destroyed through spells cast through the tome might find similar fates.

The Blasphemous Libram

The *Blasphemous Libram* itself is a powerful evil artifact, infused with the evil wills of the Daughters of Blackest Night and of many of those who have borne and read the book since its creation. The book seeks to fall into the hands of inexperienced warlocks whom it can more easily corrupt and groom to become forces of true evil.

Power of Glasya's Patronage

Accepting a gift from Glasya is dangerous, but infernal warlocks stand to benefit from the gift moreso than others. At your DM's option, there might be added restrictions for gaining the feats and powers in this article to help preserve the associated story elements.

Blasphemous Libram: Characters can acquire the Daughter's Promises feat and associated powers only after discovering the *Blasphemous Libram*. This restriction keeps these powers both rare and special in your game.

Retraining Only: Characters can gain powers presented in this article only by retraining other powers. This restriction underscores the difficulty one faces when mastering these powers and also reflects the character's growing corruption.

New Warlock Spells

The following new powers represent many spells used by the Daughters of Blackest Night, but they are available to any warlock with a penchant toward the sinister. Many offer the warlock a chance to reclaim and bolster their greatest powers by sacrificing a small amount of pain to Glasya.

Level 1 Daily Spell

The Lash's Bite — Warlock Attack 1

By focusing your will, you rip vital energy from your enemy and cause it to ache deeply at the resulting loss.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One enemy
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + Constitution modifier psychic damage, and the target loses all immunities and resistances (save ends).
Infernal Pact: The target takes a –2 penalty to the first saving throw against this effect.
Miss: By choosing to take psychic damage equal to 5 + one-half your level, you do not expend this power and you gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll with this power against the same target before the end of your next turn. You cannot reduce the damage you take in any way.

Vile Brand — Warlock Attack 1

With only a word, you cause a distant enemy's hide to blacken and form a brand that decreases your foe's ability to strike against you.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fear, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Target: One enemy
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + Constitution modifier psychic damage, and the target and any enemy adjacent to the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Infernal Pact: Any enemy within 2 squares of you also takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Miss: By choosing to take psychic damage equal to 5 + one-half your level, you do not expend this power and you gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll with this power against the same target before the end of your next turn. You cannot reduce the damage you take in any way.

Level 2 Utility Spell

Ruinous Phrase — Warlock Utility 2

The words that leave your lips resonate within an object, causing it to shatter.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Standard Action **Close** burst 10
Target: One unattended Medium or smaller non-magical, inanimate object in burst
Effect: If the target has hit points equal to 20 + your level or fewer, you destroy it. Otherwise, you deal it no damage and do not expend this power.
Infernal Pact: The target is destroyed if it has hit points equal to 25 + your level or fewer, instead of 20.

Level 5 Daily Spells

Blistering Torrent — Warlock Attack 5

As you utter blistering words, your foes feel a dull pain that crescendos into a sharp pain and leaves them unable to hear for a time.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Target: Each creature in blast
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier necrotic damage, and the target is deafened until the end of the encounter.
Infernal Pact: The target is also slowed (save ends).

Hellsworn Blessing — Warlock Attack 5

The words you whisper in an ally's ear transform your companion into a more useful servant.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Polymorph
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One ally
Effect: The target assumes the form of a hellsworn until the end of the encounter or until you dismiss the effect as a minor action. While in this form, the target gains darkvision, gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls, and deals 2d8 extra fire damage with melee attacks.
Infernal Pact: The target also gains resist fire equal to 5 + one-half your level.

Level 6 Utility Spell

Unspeakable Bond — Warlock Utility 6

The injury you sustain vanishes and reappears on a nearby ally, and with it comes a cold anger that makes your ally a more dangerous combatant.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** 5
Trigger: You are damaged by an attack
Target: One ally
Effect: The target takes the damage from the triggering attack instead of you. You still take any other effects from the attack. The target gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and a +5 power bonus to damage rolls until the end of your next turn.
Infernal Pact: The target also gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Level 9 Daily Spells

Infectious Curse — Warlock Attack 9

A hideous glyph burns into your enemy's brow and a vile darkness spreads the curse your enemy now carries to its allies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One enemy
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + Constitution modifier damage. Until the end of the encounter, any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to the target gains your Warlock's Curse.
Infernal Pact: You can also slide the target a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier.
Miss: By choosing to take psychic damage equal to 5 + one-half your level, you do not expend this power and you gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll with this power against the same target before the end of your next turn. You cannot reduce the damage you take in any way.

Level 10 Utility Spell

Brimstone Caress — Warlock Utility 10

With a single swift word, you cause an ally to erupt in hellish flames and reappear.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Teleportation
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One ally
Effect: The target takes fire damage equal to half your level and teleports 5 squares.
Infernal Pact: The target gains concealment until the start of your next turn.

Level 15 Daily Spells

Blasphemous Utterance — Warlock Attack 15

The terrible words you speak toll within the minds of those you wish to harm and cause them to lose some battle proficiency.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier psychic damage.
Effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls and defenses (save ends).
Infernal Pact: The target also takes vulnerable 5 psychic damage (save ends).

Evil Expulsion — Warlock Attack 15

You pronounce your enemy's doom and filthy black tendrils erupt to curse another in your enemy's presence.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + Constitution modifier psychic damage, and the target falls prone. You can place your Warlock's Curse on any enemy adjacent to the target.
Infernal Pact: You can instead place your Warlock's Curse on any enemy within 3 squares of the target.
Miss: By choosing to take psychic damage equal to 5 + one-half your level, you do not expend this power and you gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll with this power against the same target before the end of your next turn. You cannot reduce the damage you take in any way.

Warlock Features

Forming pacts with Glasya can change how your warlock class features look. Whenever you target a creature with Warlock's Curse, all color bleeds from the target, leaving behind an ashen creature touched by your blasphemous utterance. Whenever you use Shadow Walk, the gathering darkness seems made up from pale, flitting spirits, cursed to languish in the Nine Hells.

Level 16 Utility Spells

Vile Resonance — Warlock Utility 16

The words you speak resonant in the area, causing both you and those you have cursed feel wounds more deeply.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, you gain vulnerable 5 to all damage, but your Warlock's Curse deals 2d6 extra damage. You can end this stance as a minor action.
Infernal Pact: Until the stance ends, you also slide any enemy you hit with an attack 1 square.

Level 19 Daily Spells

Hellfire Eruption — Warlock Attack 19

Your foe erupts in hellish black flames that boil and writhe, incinerating anyone that comes too close.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d8 + Constitution modifier fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). While the target has this ongoing fire damage, any creature that starts its turn in a square adjacent to the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Infernal Pact: The target also takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls while it has ongoing damage from this power.
Miss: By choosing to take psychic damage equal to 5 + one-half your level, you do not expend this power and you gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll with this power against the same target before the end of your next turn. You cannot reduce the damage you take in any way.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Allegiance to the Daughter

Prerequisite: Warlock, Infernal Pact
Benefit: Whenever you reduce an enemy you have cursed to 0 hit points with a warlock attack, the enemy's space fills with hellfire until the end of your next turn. Any creature that enters or starts its turn within the square takes fire damage equal to 5 + one-half your level.

Dark Thaumaturgy

Prerequisite: Warlock, Daughter's Promises feat
Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to all skill checks related to performing a ritual for each milestone you have achieved so far today.

Daughter's Promises

Prerequisite: Warlock, Infernal Pact
Benefit: Replace your pact boon with the following: When an enemy under your Warlock's Curse drops to 0 hit points, you deal fire damage equal to 5 + one-half your level to any enemy within 1 square of that enemy. You also gain temporary hit points equal to one-half your level.

Devil's Favor

Prerequisite: Warlock, Infernal Pact
Benefit: Whenever you use your second wind, you can choose to regain no hit points to instead gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and damage rolls until the end of your next turn.

Glasya's Rebuke

Prerequisite: Warlock, Infernal Pact, *hellish rebuke* power

Benefit: Each time a target takes damage from *hellish rebuke* because you took damage, one enemy within 5 squares of the target also takes 5 fire damage.

Hellbound Heart

Prerequisite: Warlock, Infernal Pact

Benefit: Whenever you spend a healing surge, you gain resist fire equal to 5 + one-half your level and a +2 bonus to your next saving throw before the end of your next turn. If you already have fire resistance, you can instead increase that resistance by 5 until the end of your next turn.

Infernal Soul

Prerequisite: Warlock, Infernal Pact

Benefit: While you have temporary hit points, you gain resist 5 fire. If you already have fire resistance, add 5 to your resistance.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Flitting Shadows

Prerequisite: 11th level, warlock, Warlock's Curse class feature.

Benefit: Whenever you hit an enemy under your Warlock's Curse with an encounter or daily warlock power, you can reduce the Warlock's Curse damage you deal to teleport the target. You can teleport the target 3 squares for each die of Warlock's Curse damage you give up.

Sickening Shadows

Prerequisite: 11th level, warlock, Shadow Walk class feature

Benefit: Whenever an enemy misses you with a melee attack while you have concealment from Shadow Walk, that enemy takes necrotic damage equal to your Intelligence modifier.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power 2*, *Draconomicon 2*, and *Primal Power*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Class Acts: Druid

By Aidyn Newman
Illustration by David Rapoza

A panther prowls the jungle, crouched low to the ground and ready to pounce at a moment's notice. Lying in ambush, latched to the ceiling of a warm, dank dungeon, a giant spider awaits its next victim. Roaring in glorious defiance, a proud lion bolsters the resolve of its pack, its enemies trembling in fear. The druid is all of these things and more – the very essence of the wild in complete harmony.

The druid is, by its very nature, an incredibly versatile class. The ability to not only use invocations, but also fight in beast form allows druids to take on many different roles in a party. In addition to this, they can also become many different kinds of animals, with distinct combat styles of their own. A boar might rush headfirst into battle, whereas a hunting cat might wait stealthily for the perfect moment to strike before revealing herself. This is where the druid's true versatility comes into play. A druid can take any form the player wishes, as long as it adheres to the rules set forth in their *wild shape* power from *Player's Handbook 2*. This leaves them open to literally hundreds of different potential forms and interpretations. Some of the powers in *Player's Handbook 2* deal with a few types of animal forms a druid might use, but they aren't all-inclusive, nor do they represent the full scope of the druid's abilities. This article gives the druid all new options for shapeshifting, including a few new utility powers, a handful of daily attack

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powers that turn the druid into new and exotic animals (or any similar counterpart the player wishes), and many new feats that allow a druid to truly become whatever animal they desire.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Patient Hunter

Prerequisite: Druid, *pounce* power, *wild shape* power

Benefit: When you hit a target with an attack using the *pounce* power, the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Ruthless Killer

Prerequisite: Druid, *grasping claws* power, *wild shape* power

Benefit: When you hit a target with the *grasping claws* power, instead of slowing the target you can instead choose for the target to be immobilized until the end of your next turn. If you are ever not adjacent to the target, the immobilized effect ends.

Unstoppable Goliath

Prerequisite: Druid, *savage rend* power, *wild shape* power

Benefit: When you hit a target with the *savage rend* power, you can shift 1 square into the space occupied by your target after you slide it.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Brutal Grappler Form

Prerequisite: 11th level, druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: While you are in beast form, you gain a +2 feat bonus to grab attempts. Additionally, any target you are grabbing while in beast form grants you combat advantage.

Fierce Thrasher Form

Prerequisite: 11th level, druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: While you are in beast form and use a beast form power that pushes, pulls, or slides the target, increase the distance of the push, pull, or slide by 1 square.

Scuttling Crawler Form

Prerequisite: 11th level, druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: While you are in beast form, you gain a +5 feat bonus to Athletics checks to climb and can climb at your speed.

Venomous Fang Form

Prerequisite: 11th level, druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: While you are in beast form, all your melee attacks with the poison keyword ignore the first 10 points of the target's poison resist. This increases to 15 points at 21st level.

New Druid Powers

The following powers can provide your druid with new means of movement, damage options, and more.

Level 5 Daily Evocation

Primal Spider — Druid Attack 5

You become a giant spider, shooting sticky webbing at a group of nearby enemies to ensnare them.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Poison, Primal
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 5 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends)
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, while you are in beast form, whenever you hit an enemy with a melee attack, that enemy is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Evocation

Treetop Lurker — Druid Utility 6

You take the form of a treetop creature or another animal or insect that can easily traverse heights, taking to a perch unseen by your enemies.

Daily ✦ Polymorph, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the form of a Tiny or Small beast or insect that can climb to great heights with ease until the end of the encounter, or until you end the effect as a free action. In this form, you gain a climb speed equal to your speed and a +5 power bonus to Stealth checks. Additionally, any time you fall, you treat the distance you fall as being 20 feet shorter for the purposes of determining falling damage. While in this form, you can't attack or use magic items.

Level 9 Daily Evocation

Primal Serpent — Druid Attack 9

You morph into a dire serpent, and deadly venom infuses your bite infused. At first, your attack seems trivial, but soon the venom saps your enemy's life away.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Poison, Primal
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, while you are in beast form, whenever you use an attack with the beast form keyword, you can choose to have that attack gain the poison keyword and deal poison damage instead of its normal damage type. If the attack already deals poison damage, it deals additional poison damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Level 10 Utility Evocation

Diving Fin — Druid Utility 10

You can transform into a small sea creature, using your fins to traverse water as easily as land.

Daily ✦ Polymorph, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the form of a Tiny or Small aquatic beast, such as a fish or eel, until the end of the encounter, or until you end the effect as a free action. In this form, you gain a swim speed equal to your speed and you can breathe underwater. While in this form, you can't attack, move on land, or use magic items.

Level 15 Daily Evocations

Primal Boar — Druid Attack 15

You become a dire boar, charging headfirst toward your designated foe. You barrel through anyone foolish enough to stand in your path.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Standard Action **Personal**
Effect: You make a charge attack. Any enemy that makes an opportunity attack against you during this charge attack takes 15 damage, and you push that enemy 1 square and knock it prone.
Until the end of the encounter, while you are in beast form, you gain +2 speed while charging and gain a bonus to damage rolls with charge attacks equal to your Constitution modifier.

Primal Crocodile — Druid Attack 15

You transform into a dire crocodile and snap your powerful jaws onto your foe's legs, making it impossible for it to escape.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is grabbed. The target takes a –2 penalty to its rolls to escape this grab.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is grabbed, but does not take the –2 penalty to escape the grab.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, while you are in beast form, when you hit an adjacent enemy with a melee attack, you grab that enemy. You can have only one creature grabbed at a time.

Level 19 Daily Evocation

Primal Lion — Druid Attack 19

Your beast form becomes that of a dire lion, inspiring awe in your allies and fear in your enemies as you roar ferociously.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Fear, Implement, Primal
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: You push the target 1 square, and it takes 3d8 + Wisdom modifier damage and is dazed (save ends).
Effect: All allies in the burst gain temporary hit points equal to your 5 + your Constitution modifier. Until the end of the encounter, while in beast form, whenever you hit an enemy adjacent to you with a melee attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Level 25 Daily Evocation

Primal Panther — Druid Attack 25

You transform into a dire panther, striking from the shadows and returning to cover immediately afterwards.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Effect: Before the attack, you can move up to half your speed.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 5d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you can shift 3 squares, after which you are considered to be invisible to the target until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, while you are in beast form, any time you hit a target that grants combat advantage to you by making a melee attack, you shift 1 square and are invisible to the target until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Aidyn Newman contends that he has spent more time creating roleplaying settings, systems, and supplements than he has studying for any class, and it probably shows. Somehow, despite this fact, he has managed to graduate from college and now attends Albany Law School in New York ... where he continues to create roleplaying settings, systems, and supplements.

Class Acts: Invoker
Secrets of the God Fragments

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustration by David Rapoza

The relationships invokers have with the gods are both simple and complex. They are simple in that the invoker draws from the god's power directly and can circumvent the filters—symbols, rituals, and ordainment—other agents require to wield divine energy. An invoker needs only to call upon energy, and it flows through the invoker's flesh to manifest in whatever way the invoker desires. In terms of complexity, the invoker cedes independence from the deity and becomes an extension of the god's will. Central to this bond is the covenant, which is the sacred agreement that facilitates the exchange of service for vast power and merges the wills and objectives of the god to that of the agent.

Many roads lead mortals to serve as invokers, but no easy path exists. Some pore over ancient holy texts to learn about a deity's higher purpose. Others are called to serve through more direct revelation—typically a dream or waking vision. Some also find a connection through a direct agent of the god's will, such as an angel, exarch, or avatar. These and other avenues can all lead to the decision point—that moment of crisis when an individual enters the compact that alters the servant's course for the rest of his or her life. For many invokers, this "spark" granted by a deity is allegorical—it is nothing more than an idea to help frame the prayers required to channel the energy. The wisest understand the spark is more than just a representation: The shard lodged within the mortal's soul is a fragment of the god's own soul.

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God Fragments

All invokers contain within them a divine spark, through which they apprehend divine power directly from their god. For many invokers, this fragment is a means to an end and serves as the source from which their power flows, but in some invokers this fragment is more than a divine spark and contains a portion of the god's own consciousness. Any invoker can stir the divine essence by selecting the Awaken God Fragment feat.

Awaken God Fragment

Prerequisite: 11th level, invoker

Benefit: The god fragment within you awakens to strengthen your connections to your divine patron and improve the flow of energy into your being. Choose a god fragment that corresponds with the deity you serve. You gain all the fragment's benefits.

GOD FRAGMENTS

By awakening your god fragment, you invite the deity's essence to permeate your body and personality in a manner that causes the boundaries between you and your god to blur. An awakened god fragment provides the following benefits.

Constant Benefits: You receive these benefits as long as you possess the Awaken God Fragment feat.

Divine Manifestation: Once per encounter, when you use a divine encounter or daily attack power, you can choose to augment it with your divine manifestation.

Quirks: This entry describes personality quirks that might manifest in you when you awaken the god fragment.

Fragment of Avandra — God Fragment

The power of Avandra allows you to ensure that no bonds can hold your allies for long.

Constant Benefits
When an ally adjacent to you makes a saving throw against an effect that includes the slowed, immobilized, or restrained condition, the ally rolls two saving throws and takes the better result.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* You grant one ally adjacent to a target of the triggering attack a saving throw. If the saving throw is against an effect that includes the slowed, immobilized, or restrained condition, the ally rolls two saving throws and takes the better result.

Quirks
Impatient, impulsive, insightful

Fragment of Bahamut — God Fragment

Your ire against any who defy the common good fills you and provides you or your allies with additional protection against your foes.

Constant Benefits
While all your encounter attack powers are expended, you gain a +1 bonus to all defenses.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* One ally you can see that is adjacent to a target of the triggering attack gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Quirks
Aggressive, guarded, protective

Fragment of Corellon — God Fragment

The secrets of magic and the wisdom of nature are constant companions to your travels, and they provide you or an ally with the ability to move at times.

Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 feat bonus to Arcana and Nature checks.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter ✦ Teleportation)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* You or an ally adjacent to you can teleport 5 squares.

Quirks
Detached, distracted, mercurial

Fragment of Erathis — God Fragment

You understand the desires of the civilized and the fears of those who dwell in savagery, which allows you to better communicate as well as anticipate a foe's next move.

Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 feat bonus to Diplomacy checks.
You can read, speak, and write one extra language.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter ✦ Fear)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* The targets of the triggering attack take a -2 penalty to attack rolls against you until the end of your next turn.

Quirks
Arrogant, inspired, strong-minded

Fragment of Ioun — God Fragment

Wisdom floods your mind, revealing the cosmos's secrets—sometimes you see the most vulnerable area of your foe's defenses as you strike.

Constant Benefits
When you make a knowledge check, roll two checks and take the best result.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You have rolled damage for a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* Reroll any number of that power's damage dice.

Quirks
Distracted, intellectual, studious

Fragment of Kord — God Fragment

You feel vigor and life flow through your veins, which sometimes allows you to shove away your foes with divine might.

Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics and Endurance.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* You push the targets of the triggering attack 2 squares.

Quirks
Abrasive, intimidating, lively

Fragment of Melora — God Fragment

You feel the forces of the wild stir your soul, granting you extra insights into nature, heartier defenses, and an ability to manipulate both friends and foes in a battle.

Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 feat bonus to Nature checks.
Each time you fail a saving throw, you gain a +2 bonus to the next saving throw you make against that effect.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* You slide one ally adjacent to you or the target of the triggering attack 2 squares.

Quirks
Fierce, quiet, violent

Fragment of Moradin — God Fragment

You are tough as iron, and you have the mettle to shield your allies from any danger.

Constant Benefits
Increase your number of healing surges by one.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* One ally you can see gains temporary hit points equal to your Constitution or Intelligence modifier.

Quirks
Loyal, intolerant, persistent

Fragment of Pelor — God Fragment

Like the sun, you bring hope to the living and destruction to creatures of shadow.

Constant Benefits
Allies adjacent to you roll two saving throws and take the best result when making death saving throws or saving throws against an effect that deals ongoing necrotic damage.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter ✦ Radiant)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* The attack deals extra radiant damage equal to your Constitution or Intelligence modifier.

Quirks
Bold, fiery, pompous

Fragment of the Raven Queen — God Fragment

Winter's cold bolsters your mind and body, and those who cross you feel its icy bite as it slows their movements.

Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 feat bonus to Intimidate checks.
You can resist ambient cold temperatures as if you were subject to the Endure Elements ritual.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* You slow all targets of the attack until the end of your next turn.

Quirks
Cruel, impartial, steadfast

Fragment of Sehanine — God Fragment

You find shadows and cloak yourself within them. No danger can keep you trapped if you wish to be free of it.

Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 feat bonus to Stealth checks.

Divine Manifestation (Encounter ✦ Teleportation)
Free Action. *Trigger:* You use a divine encounter or daily attack power. *Effect:* You gain concealment until the start of your next turn. If you are hit by an attack while you have concealment, you can teleport 2 squares as an immediate reaction. Increase the number of squares you can teleport by 1 for each milestone you have reached today.

Quirks
Alluring, cautious, sneaky

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power™ 2*, *Draconomicon™: Metallic Dragons*, and *Primal Power™*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Power Play: Arcane's Gloaming Path

As the lightning crashed around us on that windswept and hail-battered knoll, I cried out to my master. I pleaded with him to quit this dangerous spell, while never sure my frantic voice broke the din. If he heard me, he ignored me. His eyes aglow with eldritch light, he intoned the fey incantation over and over again. With each verse the world seemed to rumble and crash toward its end. With each syllable he called down our doom.

And then, with unnatural immediacy, the storm ended. The clouds hastily parted, the smell of ozone dissipated, and sun shone so powerfully upon the menhirs that their drenched stone let go fine wisps of steam. Slowly taking my hands from my ears, I looked toward my master. He was the same man who led me to the hillock, that was for sure, but he had changed. He became . . . more . . . more fey.

"I am done with you, lad. I take the next step toward seeking the true mysteries of magic. The Witch of Fates has seen fit to let you live, and that is both a boon and a portent. It is your turn to go out in the world to find your way on the Gloaming Path."

I stood there slack-jawed and confused as my master opened a fey passage and bid his final farewell with only a slight raising of his sigil-carved staff.

I never saw him again, and I had no idea what he meant, until now.

–From the journal of Quinliss the Twilight Walker

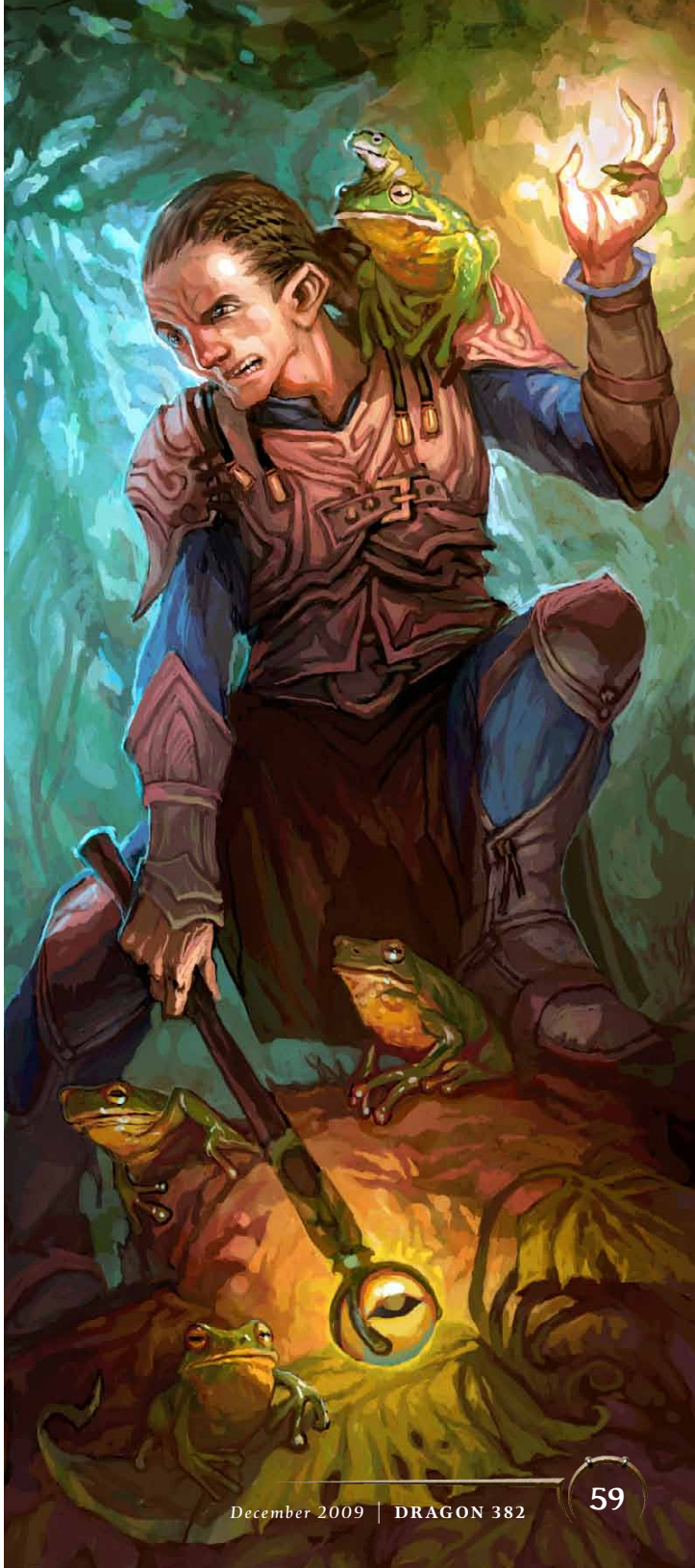
By Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Illustrations by Alex Aparin

If you listen to a guild mage, she'll tell you that the best way to master the arcane arts is by diligent study of the old masters. She'll insist you endure the dust of old scrolls and the tiny scrawl of Nerath or Bael Turath archmages found within fragile pages of worm-chewed tomes. That is one path; it's not the only path.

Some gain divine inspiration not from the works and formulas of those who came before them, but they would rather go to one of the most potent sources of arcane power—the Feywild.

Although the Feywild is not the sole origin of arcane magic, it's a powerful one. The practitioners of fey arcane power are both mysterious and subtle. Some of the most subtle follow the Gloaming Court, which is a confederation of philosopher fey that holds sway over the twilight, romance, dreams, inspiration, epiphany, and dusk. Nontraditionalist, they follow a particular path of arcane enlightenment they call the Gloaming Path.

The following is a small selection of the Gloaming Path backgrounds, powers, and familiars available to heroic tier arcane spellcasters.



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Backgrounds

Although the Gloaming Path can be a revelation discovered later in the life and learning of any arcane master, frequently a potential spellcaster feels the pull of the path at an early age. A messenger of the Gloaming Court might make note of the character, or a chance encounter can open one's mind to its mystical possibilities.

Child of Fate: You were born with a birthmark associated with a member of the Gloaming Court: a moon, a heart, or even the stylized loom shape of the Witch of Fate. Whatever form the mark takes, you were called at birth as a traveler on the Gloaming Path, whether you like it or not.

Associated Skills: Nature, Insight

Moonstruck Hunter: One night, when the moon was full, you followed a spectral stag that led you deep into the wilderness. There you danced with a member of the Gloaming Court, who introduced you to his or her mysteries. Since then you've been in some way fey-touched, and now you walk in silence upon dusky paths of mystery.

Associated Skills: Perception, Stealth

Powers

Although the Gloaming Path as a whole is as broad and clever as a dreamscape, many of its practitioners utilize the powers that specialize in movement of the body, the mind, and the fates. Some of the most iconic of these powers come in the form of arcane utility powers.

Moonstride — Wizard Utility 2

This trick of the Maiden of the Moon allows you to take a form of pure moonlight and to evade your enemies with ease.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy moves adjacent to you
Effect: You become insubstantial until the end of your next turn. Then you shift 2 squares to a square farther from the triggering enemy.

Charm of Hearts — Warlock Utility 2

Your enemies might not love you, but thanks to this charm crafted by the Prince of Hearts, they do not attack you when you give them the opportunity.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Charm
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you do not provoke opportunity attacks and you gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

Fate's Frayed Thread — Warlock Utility 6

With one miss, the fates collude against your enemy, heralding its ultimate doom.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy misses you with an attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: You place your Warlock's Curse on the target. Also, until the end of your next turn, the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls against you and grants combat advantage to you.

Stride of the Gallant — Swordmage Utility 6

With the rush of wind, you blink to your enemy's side, darting around the battlefield in a swirl of sword and spell.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Stance, Teleportation
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, you gain teleport 3 as a move action, but you must end such teleports adjacent to an enemy.

Witch's Reversal — Wizard Utility 10

You look at the world with the eyes of the Witch of Fates, then pull the strands that allow you to steal victory from defeat.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You use an arcane attack power and miss with at least two of that power's attack rolls
Effect: You reroll the attack rolls that missed their targets and use the new results.

Maiden's Waking — Sorcerer Utility 10

The Maiden of the Moon rouses you from your languor.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
No Action **Personal**
Trigger: You start your turn stunned, dazed, or unconscious
Effect: You take your turn as though you were not stunned, dazed, or unconscious. At the end of your turn, the effect continues as normal.

Familiars

Characters can gain the following familiars by using the Arcane Familiar feat (*Arcane Power*™, page 139). Each is associated with an archfey or aspect of the Gloaming Court, and often (but not always) an arcane character must first perform a service or be noticed by the archfey or aspect before it is "gifted" with the appropriate familiar.

Familiar Milestone Powers: Each of these Gloaming Path familiars have a power that the master of the familiar can use once per milestone. These powers recharge when the familiar's master takes an extended rest and with each milestone the master reaches.

Muse Sprite

These spirits flit all over the Feywild, frequently taking the form of speedy flickering motes of light that are similar to will-o'-wisps. When bound into the form of the familiar, they take a humanoid form and look like a luminescent creature with slight wings.

Many Gloaming Court archfey and powerful spellcasters bind these spirits into muse form for those who serve them. Muse sprites are the most common familiar granted by the Gloaming Court.

Muse Sprite Familiar

The muse sprite is a small glowing humanoid creature with gossamer wings, and it serves you as a councilor and a messenger.

Senses low-light vision
Speed 4, fly 6 (hover)
Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks.
The muse sprite radiates dim light in a 2-square radius.
Active Benefits
Bearer of News: The muse sprite can deliver a short written message to someone up to 5 miles away for you.
Insightful Councilor: Once per milestone, when you make an Arcana, Nature, or History check, you can roll two d20s and take the higher roll.

White-Eyed Crow

These spirits serve the powerful fey oracle known as the Witch of Fates. Some say that these milky-eyed blackbirds don't see form and color, but rather they see the strands of fate that connect all living creatures to their and other creatures' dooms.

The Witch of Fates bequeaths a white-eyed crow to her servants and to poor melancholy souls who are doomed to do fate's bidding. Both are the fickle witch's chosen.

White-Eyed Crow Familiar

A white-eyed crow has stark white eyes, without pupils, but it is not blind. This small black bird sees more than any mortal creature.

Senses darkvision
Speed 2, fly 6 (hover)
Constant Benefits
You can't be surprised.
Active Benefits
Fate's Agent: When you spend an action point to make an attack, you can reroll one missed attack roll against a target of that attack if that target is adjacent to the white-eyed crow.

Gallant Hawk

The gallant hawk spirit takes the form of a noble hunting hawk, and the features on its white breast form a heater shield. A favorite familiar and symbol of elf and eladrin swordmages and multiclass spellcasting warriors, the gallant hawk is believed by some to be the lingering spirit of famous and forlorn fey warriors.

A gift of the passionate but capricious Prince of Hearts, a gallant hawk is granted to those warriors who fight for honor, love, and beauty.

Gallant Hawk Familiar

Noble hawks with sable wings and a white breast in the form of a shield, gallant hawk spirits have a form of raptor beauty whether at the glove or in flight.

Speed 2, fly 6 (hover)
Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 bonus to Perception checks.
While a creature marked by you is adjacent to you, it takes a -3 penalty to attack rolls on attacks that don't include you as a target instead of the normal -2 from being marked.
Active Benefits
Gallant's Call: Once per milestone, as a minor action, you can mark each creature adjacent to the gallant hawk (save ends).

Moon Wisp

These motes of pale luminescence flitter though the darkest woods of the Feywild primeval forests in the dead of winter. Sometimes helpful, they've been known to guide a hunter to his or her prey when the need is great, but they're also known to torment evil or vicious predators, especially lycanthropes.

Keeping a moon wisp as a familiar is typically a sign of favor from the Maiden of the Moon. As a result, sometimes this spirit is called Maiden's kiss.

Moon Wisp Familiar

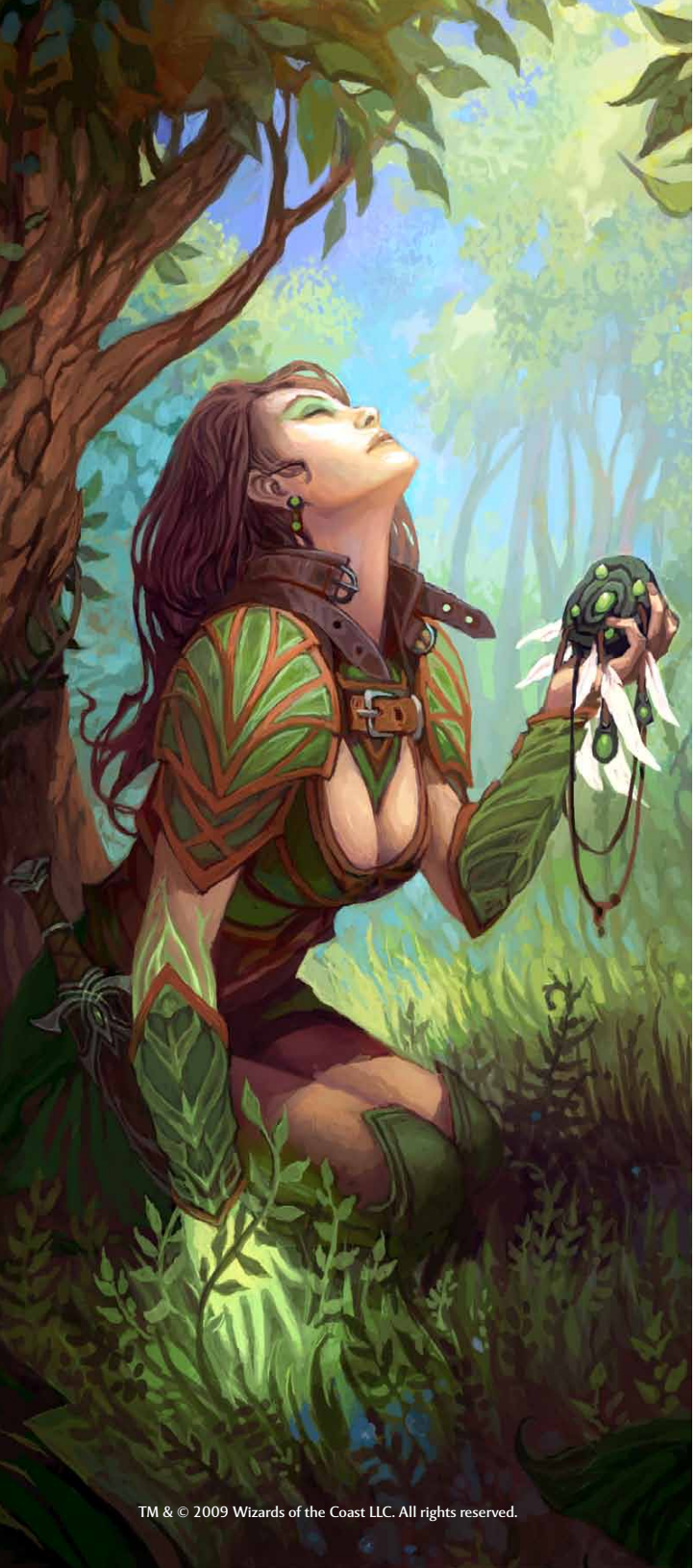
These wisps of pale moonlight move to and fro through the night like a luminous tadpole in a wine-dark sea.

Speed fly 6 (hover)
Constant Benefits
You gain a +2 bonus to Arcana and Nature checks.
The moon wisp radiates dim or bright light in a radius from 2 to 10 squares. You can change the details as a minor action, but it defaults to dim light in a 2-square radius.
Active Benefits
Moon Bite: Once per milestone, as a minor action, the moon's light reveals truth. Until the end of your next turn, attacks against any creature within 2 squares of the moon wisp do not take the -2 penalty from concealment.

About the Author

Born on a stormy Christmas day, in our nation's capital, during the Nixon administration, the stars were definitely wrong when **Stephen Radney-MacFarland** came screaming into the world. Spending most of his impressionable years as a vagabond and ne'r-do-well, Stephen eventually settled in the Northwest to waste his life on roleplaying games.

Once that RPGA® guy, Stephen is now a developer in RPG R&D where he doesn't create the traps . . . he just makes them deadlier. He also teaches a class on roleplaying design for the Art Institute of Seattle, molding the minds of young and upcoming designers. Be afraid. Be very afraid.



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Power Play: Primal

By Tavis Allison
Illustrations by Alex Aparin

"Making a map creates connections. The more faithfully we record a place, the more we share in the power of its spirit of place."
~Noela Xoana, disciple of Lugos

In the wildest areas of the Nentir Vale, legends tell of a time when the world was ripe with power. A questing hero could find whatever he or she sought if he or she had the will to travel far enough. Those who discovered a node of earth energy, a spring of vital water, or an elder spirit generous with its great wisdom achieved many great things. But the greatest hero of all was the first primal mapper, Lugos, who invented a method for leading others to rediscover the things he had found during his journeys.

Unlike traditional maps, primal maps provide those using them with the full story of their maker's experience. They preserve how the feel of the sand changed underfoot as Lugos descended into the Forlorn Drift, and how his spirit soared when he found the source of Nine Snake River. A traditional cartographer converts a surveyor's measurements into an imaginary bird's-eye view of the land. For those who have learned Lugos's craft, though, they need no such abstraction. If they want to see the world as a bird does, they become one, and the primal map they create as they soar is a visceral record of each thermal updraft and spray of rain.

A primal map guides both body and soul. The record Lugos created of his journey to the Well of the Head can guide you and your comrades through the surrounding forest like any other map. The unique virtue of a primal map, though, is that you can send your spirit along the path it creates, reliving the experience of the mapper's journey as if in a dream. Using a primal map in this way takes as long as it took the original mapper to make the journey, during which time you are in a dreamlike state similar to an eladrin's trance.

Paragon Path

The following paragon path can provide characters with options for tactical movement in combat as well as a character concept that allows a player and DM to help others visualize locations.

Primal Mapper

"My spirit is part of this land, and I carry the landscape within me. You cannot block my path."

Prerequisites: Primal power source

When did you first know that your awareness of the world around you is unique? Perhaps you were underground when a gust of wind blew out your torches, leaving your party in utter darkness from which only you could lead the way back. Or maybe you were attacked under cover of a thick fog and shouted out, "Retreat and regroup at our last campsite!" Only after you said this did you realize that you were the only one for whom that was as easy to find as your own foot. Your comrades have long relied on your intuition to determine which tunnel leads to the surface and where you will find higher ground that better allows you to defend yourself against your pursuers.

Some primal mappers are disciples of Lugos's teachings, while others have discovered his principles independently. You took your first steps toward the path of the primal mapper when you became aware that each of the places in the world has its primal spirit of place—a spirit intimately connected to its location. Your devotion to noticing and remembering every detail of the lands you travel makes you akin to these spirits of place. Like them, your abilities go beyond a superior tactical understanding of position and landscape and into a mystical realm where making a representation of a place gives you power over it. You need not even physically create a map to provide a connection by which spirits from that realm can enter the mundane world; simply visualizing one will suffice. Let those who would stand in your way beware!

Primal Mapper Path Features

Rerouted Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can also move your speed or shift half your speed before or after that action.

Revitalizing Run (11th level): When you use your second wind, you can also move your speed or shift half your speed.

Lay of the Land (16th level): You ignore difficult terrain.

Primal Mapper Evocations

Pale Wolf's Lure — Primal Mapper Attack 11

You visualize your strike tracing a path to the hunting grounds of the pale wolves, and the scent of your foe draws the predators to follow.

Encounter ✦ Conjuration, Primal
Free Action — **Personal**
Trigger: You make an attack roll for an at-will power
Effect: If your attack hits its target, the target takes 2d10 extra damage and you conjure a pale wolf that occupies one square adjacent to the target until the end of your next turn. Any enemy that moves out of a square adjacent to the wolf takes 5 damage.

Allied Terrain — Primal Mapper Utility 12

You call upon the local spirits to guide your allies' steps.

Daily ✦ Primal
Minor Action — **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, allies ignore difficult terrain while within 3 squares of you, and enemies treat the space within 3 squares of you as difficult terrain.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

Lugos's Hunt — Primal Mapper Attack 20

You spill your foe's blood on the ground, fixing your enemy on your internal landscape so that hiding is impossible.

Daily ✦ Primal
Free Action — **Personal**
Trigger: You make an attack roll for an at-will power
Effect: If your attack hits its target, the target takes 4d10 extra damage. Until the end of the encounter, you ignore penalties to attack rolls against the target from concealment or total concealment if you have line of sight to the target.

Magic Items

Some primal maps have been integrated into magic items.

Armor

Snake's Lair Armor — Level 7+

The bumps of this snakeskin armor's surface tell your fingers about each ridge and valley encountered while tracking the Eternal Enemy to its lair.

Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp			

Armor: Leather, hide
Enhancement: AC
Property: You do not grant combat advantage or take a penalty to attack rolls while you are squeezing.
Power (Daily): Move Action. You shift half your speed. You can shift through enemies' squares during this move.

Weapon

Cavern Explorer's Weapon — Level 3+

The haft of this weapon is scored with notches that count Maldoor's paces and record which way he turned in the Caverns of the Garden.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Axe, hammer, spear, staff

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, and you push the target 1 square and shift 1 square into a square the target vacated.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a primal attack power using this weapon. *Effect:* You push the target 1 square, and you and each ally within 5 squares of you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Totem

Astral Redoubt Totem — Level 4+

Each string of this dream-catcher totem records a leg of Rolant's journey across the Astral Sea, including a refuge along the path.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Implement (Totem)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, and you regain hit points equal to twice the totem's enhancement bonus.

Power (Daily ✦ Healing, Teleportation): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a primal attack power using this totem. *Effect:* Any ally within 5 squares regains hit points equal to twice the totem's enhancement bonus and can disappear to a place of safety in the Astral Sea until the start of his or her next turn. While there, the ally has neither line of sight nor line of effect to anything, and nothing has line of sight or line of effect to the ally.

Hands Slot Item

River of Life Gloves — Level 7+

These gloves bear turquoise and green patterns that show the coastline leading to the mouth of the River of Life.

Lvl 7	2,600 gp	Lvl 27	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	65,000 gp		

Item Slot: Hands

Power (Daily ✦ Healing): Free Action. *Trigger:* You succeed on a Heal check to stabilize a dying creature. *Effect:* The dying creature regains 5 hit points and can spend a healing surge.

Level 17: The dying creature regains 10 hit points and can spend a healing surge.

Level 27: The dying creature regains 15 hit points and can spend a healing surge.

About the Author

Tavis Allison is the co-author of the *Dragon® Magazine* article "Warden Essentials" and several other D&D® projects that he can't wait to see released so that he can mention them in his About the Author section. Tavis plays and DMs with the New York Red Box.

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Winning Races: Drow

More options for drow characters

By Bruce R. Cordell
Illustration by Wayne England

Wait . . . what's with your hair? And skin . . . By Moradin's shaggy beard, you're no eladrin—you're a drow! Guards! Help! A wight of the Underdark is trying to burgle me!
—Antonus Ginpoke, bazaar shopkeep

Drow are graceful, deadly, and feared. Despite stories of certain drow disdaining their culture and joining adventuring companies on the surface, the drow racial reputation of decadence and evil will always precede any individual, no matter how sophisticated, beautiful, or honestly true-hearted that individual might claim to be. These good drow have to face the fact that the vast majority of drow base their behavior and attitudes on the worship of the chaotic evil goddess Lolth, also known as the Spider Queen.

But the heart of every individual drow is its own. Some few in every generation find that the ways of their people are not enough to sustain them. These drow try to find a different way—one less dependent on treachery and malice.

Most of these are killed by other drow.

The few who survive such an awakening flee their homeland. They often come to the surface, hoping to discover more open-minded people than their own relatives. Sometimes such drow refugees find success, but never immediately or permanently.

The Basics

Some races are more iconic to Dungeons & Dragons® than others. While the elf and dwarf have fulfilled that role through every edition of the game, the race most people love to hate is the drow. And, ever since Drizzt showed that not all drow were irredeemably evil, the idea of drow characters has tantalized most gaming tables at one time or another. The drow's lasting popularity is easily understood—at one time or another, most people want to play a character with the reputation for being sexy, bad, and a little treacherous.

Overcoming the Stereotype

Your drow character's role in the party is determined first by the your class choice. However, the choice of race can play a large part, too, especially if you choose drow and roleplaying is a strong feature of your gaming group.

Presumably the other players around the table have come to some sort of accommodation regarding your drow character. However, that doesn't mean the NPCs your character meets have come to a similar conclusion regarding your basic kindhearted nature. So, you have three choices when faced with this sort of prejudice against your character.

One choice is to simply grin and bear it, and defend yourself only when forced to it. Many NPCs are, like most real people, better at slinging insults and threats than real fists and knives. Of course, this tack requires a thick skin. It's a hard thing to smile and walk away when an idiot barbarian is enthralling his companions with tales of how he'll soon be making a new cloak from your stinking drow pelt. Moreover, unlike the real world, the NPCs who are armed are not shy about using their weapons to demonstrate their opinions. This means that, barring any other actions on your part, you're likely in for a higher number of fights than you would otherwise have to face.

The second choice in dealing with worldly prejudice is to hide your drow heritage when out and about in public places. A hood and gloves is good enough for casual encounters. However, without further occlusion, this usually fails in well-lit areas and when you're forced to deal with an NPC at close quarters. The perfect addition to a hood and gloves is a mask. In a fantasy world of fantastic creatures and equally wondrous accessories, a full-face mask isn't especially out of place. If you're asked to remove it for some reason, claim it's a cursed item and its affixed permanently to your face.

When considering the second choice, if masks and hoods are not your style, you could instead train in Bluff for the purposes of perfecting a physical disguise. Disguising your race to make yourself appear either as an eladrin or elf is your best bet. A little make-up and hair dye will do the trick, though the test comes when your Bluff check is opposed by a creature's Insight. A magic item that provides functionality similar to the wizard's Disguise Self utility power, such as the *hat of disguise*, would be useful.

Your final option in dealing with drow haters is to be a fast talker (being skilled in Diplomacy helps). Many overbearing buffoons might fall speechless in the face of wit and charm. Sometimes simple checks suffice, and other times your DM might wish you to succeed at a skill challenge involving Diplomacy, Insight, and Bluff.

Bring the Dark

All drow have the ability to use *cloud of darkness* or *darkfire* during a particular encounter. As described in the *Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide*, your drow can do one or the other in any given encounter.

In many cases, using *darkfire* is the preferred choice, at least if you want to allow your allies to see your foes. By limning your foe in a flickering halo of light, you make it easier for both yourself and all your companions to hit the foe. This is an especially potent effect if you have allies that rely on combat advantage to trigger the full effect of their powers, such as rogues.

When you decide to use *cloud of darkness*, you have the advantage of not having to make an attack roll to affect your target. Place the burst around you, and any foe with normal senses that is within the darkness is suddenly blind. However, many of your fellow characters cannot see the foe, either. Overuse of this power can trigger this particular situation so often that your companions can become frustrated with you. Thus, before triggering this power, determine whether any of your allies are about to target the foe with an attack. Otherwise you run the risk of frustrating their efforts. Of course, sometimes blinding a foe is the perfect solution, especially if that foe is particularly dangerous and your companions are sorely hurt. Putting up a *cloud of darkness* can provide the moment of time necessary for your allies to use their second winds, gain healing, or simply to flee.

Drow Feats

Depending on your feat selection, your feats can enhance your class abilities, augment your drow abilities and aesthetics, or both. This section introduces a few new feats designed to bring out your inner drow.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a drow character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Darkfire Dancer

Prerequisites: Drow

Benefit: If you are adjacent to a target affected by your *darkfire*, you can shift 2 squares as a move action.

Drow Ecclesiastic [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Drow, Channel Divinity class feature

Benefit: You can invoke the power of the divine to use *drow ecclesiastic*.

Channel Divinity: Drow Ecclesiastic Feat Power

Lolth punishes those who escape her wiles.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Poison
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 5
Trigger: An enemy within range succeeds on a saving throw to end a condition
Effect: The target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Knife in the Dark

Prerequisite: Drow

Benefit: You gain a +4 feat bonus to damage rolls against targets within your *cloud of darkness*. This bonus increases to +5 at 11th level, and +6 at 21st level.

Secret Recovery

Prerequisite: Drow

Benefit: When you succeed on a saving throw to end an effect, you can, as a free action, shift 1 square and make a Stealth check to hide if you have superior cover or total concealment.

Underdark Climber

Prerequisite: Trained in Acrobatics

Benefit: You can use your Acrobatics skill in place of your Athletics checks to climb walls.

You also gain a +2 feat bonus to Acrobatics checks.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a drow character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Cloud of Poison

Prerequisite: 11th level, drow

Benefit: Any enemy who starts its turn within your *cloud of darkness* takes 5 poison damage.

Darkness Reign

Prerequisite: 11th level, drow

Benefit: As long as you are within your *cloud of darkness*, you can sustain the effect as a standard action. Each time you sustain the effect, it lasts until the end of your next turn.

Spider Charmer [Divinity]

Prerequisite: 11th level, drow, Channel Divinity class feature

Benefit: You can invoke the power of the divine to use *spider charmer*.

Channel Divinity: Spider Charmer Feat Power

You draw upon Lolth's ability to command spiders and drow.

Encounter ✦ Charm, Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One spider or drow
Attack: Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma vs. Will
Hit: The target spider or drow is dominated until the end of your next turn.

Venom Master

Prerequisite: 11th level, drow

Benefit: When you hit a creature with your *darkfire* racial power they gains vulnerability 5 poison until the end of the encounter.

Web Spinner

Prerequisite: 11th level, drow

Benefit: When you score a critical hit on an opportunity attack, the target is also immobilized (save ends).

Epic Tier Feats

Drow must be level 21 or higher to take the following feats.

Fist of Night

Prerequisite: 21st level, drow

Benefit: Once on your turn when you miss a target that is within your *cloud of darkness* with a melee attack, you can make a melee basic attack as a free action against a different target.

Lolth Blessed

Prerequisite: 21st level, drow

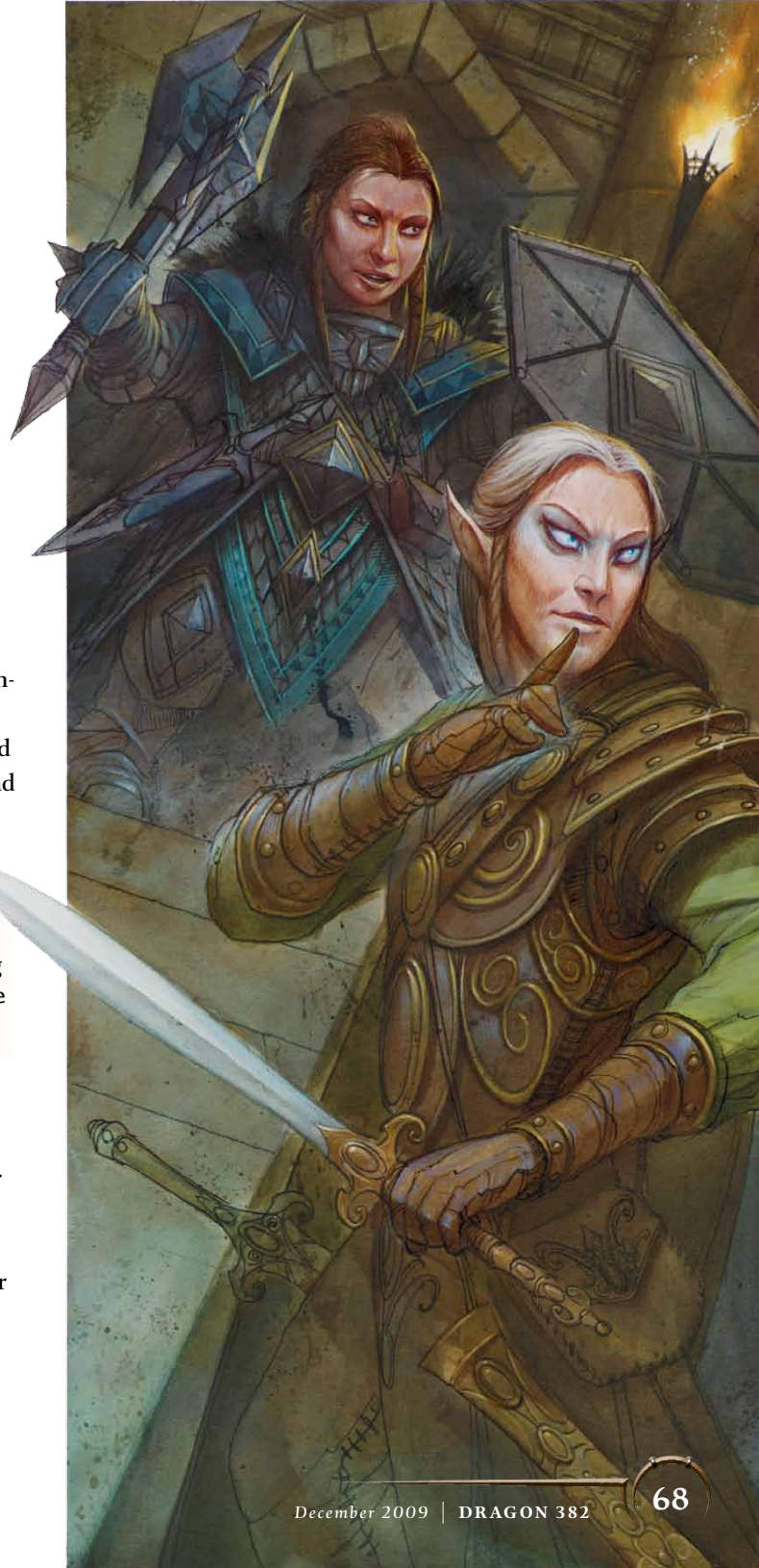
Benefit: Any time you use an action point, you regain the use of your Lolthtouched racial ability during the encounter if you've already used it (and can use either *cloud of darkness* or *darkfire*).

About the Author

Bruce R. Cordell is an Origins and ENnie award-winning game designer whose long list of professional credits include the new *Forgotten Realms® Campaign Guide*™, *Keep on the Shadowfell*™, *Draconomicon I: Chromatic Dragons*™ and *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*™. Bruce is also an author of Forgotten Realms novels, including *Plague of Spells*, first book in the new Abolethic Sovereignty series.

Winning Races: Dusk Elf

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustrations by Wayne England



At the dawn of creation, no difference between the eladrin and elves existed, and no wickedness sundered the drow from their light-dwelling kin. They were one people, bound through common love and life, and united by the eagerness and curiosity for the natural world's many wonders. All this ended during the dread wars between the Houses, because Lolth's poison sundered family, shattered bonds, and altered the eladrin's course for all time.

Even as the eladrin rallied against their dark kin, some chose no side. They sought escape from the escalating violence and retreated to the mortal world. The nobles who led the sylvan armies against the dark host deemed those who fled traitors, and Corellon vowed vengeance against them for their cowardice. Sehanine did not share her counterpart's wrath and saw their flight as fitting for those who embraced her tenets. So when the drow were driven into the world's Underdark and Lolth was cast into the Abyss, Sehanine sheltered those who abstained from the war as her chosen people, raising a veil to hide them from anyone seeking retribution.

Over the intervening generations, these eladrin lived in secret, forbidden from returning to their homeland and afraid to range too far from their hidden redoubts. Only after the ancient wars and their part in them began to fade did such eladrin venture farther afield. Fey memory is long indeed, and some eladrin and elves bear the lost tribe, now called dusk elves, ill will, but many find ways to look beyond the ancient offense and take these people for who they now are.

DUSK ELVES

Dusk elves are represented mechanically by taking the Dusk Elf Stealth feat. Otherwise, dusk elves are mechanically identical to normal elves.

Physical Qualities

Dusk elves are a slight folk, and they look almost identical to their elf counterparts. Where they differ is in complexion. Although common elves favor tans and browns, dusk elves are as pale as moonlight, with fair hair and light blue or violet eyes. They favor subdued colors and are rarely ostentatious in their apparel.

Playing a Dusk Elf

Where common elves are free-spirited and mercurial, dusk elves are furtive, haunted, and suspicious. Dusk elves restrict their emotions to a narrow range, showing little joy and less grief. For all their disinclination for emotional displays, dusk elves are a people of deep feeling. When alone or among a trusted few, they give in to their happiness and sorrow with surprising intensity.

Dusk elves value their privacy and guard their lands from trespassers. During private moments, they reflect on their nature, their people's history, and the plans Sehanine has for them. They see the natural world as a prison, albeit a beautiful one, and pine for the fabulous cities and verdant fey lands they abandoned long ago.

Those who shrug off this melancholy sometimes leave their hidden communities to see what the world has to offer. Adventuring is a common pastime for these bold souls, and they prove constant, though detached, comrades. They show little of the joy shared by other elves. However, dusk elves are sensitive about their reputations and might go overboard to prove their loyalty.

Sehanine remains a powerful presence among the dusk elves, and many exclude other gods on holy days. Dusk elves forbid worship of Corellon in their communities, and those who maintain shrines must do so in secret lest they face exile and ostracism. A few dusk elves follow Ioun, the Raven Queen, and/or Melora. Rumors persist about Lolth cults in dusk elf communities.

Dusk Elf Characteristics: Constant, detached, furtive, melancholic, quiet, reserved, secretive, sly, somber

Dusk Elf Backgrounds

A dusk elf has access to the following backgrounds.

Corellon Dedicate: Sehanine's children chose no side in the Kin Wars, and their neutrality won them scorn and self-imposed exile. Since the eladrin held family ties to be stronger than any other consideration, some among the refugees disagreed and were loyal to Corellon, but found themselves swept up in the flight to the world. You descend from these tragic dedicates, and though your people were shamed, your family has remained loyal to Corellon these long years. How have you kept your devotion secret? Something must have led to your leaving the community. Was it a revelation about your allegiance? Or were you tired of living a lie? How has the faith of your family served them and you?

Associated Skills: Arcana, Stealth

Gloaming Guardian: Dusk elves protect their communities from trespass thanks to the gloaming guardians' efforts. Deadly sentinels, they guard the routes into their communities, and if they encounter intruders, they use their considerable talents to drive interlopers away. Failing that, the guardians pick such trespassers off one at a time until they realize their error and return from where they came. You were trained to be one such sentinel. Why did you leave this responsibility? Gloaming guardians are sometimes the only dusk elves who meet other peoples. Was an intruder responsible for your break? How do your dusk elf family and friends see your leaving?

Associated Skills: Intimidate, Stealth

Dusk Envoy: Factions within dusk elf communities push for reconciliation with elves and eladrin. They face strong opposition, but a few communities have been successful in establishing talks with their estranged kin. Why were you chosen to be your people's envoy? How do you see the larger world? Have you made any connections beyond your homeland?

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, History

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Dusk Elf Stealth [Elf Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Elf

Benefit: All allies within 6 squares of you that do not have this feat gain a +1 racial bonus to Stealth checks.

Dusk Elf Weapon Training

Prerequisite: Dusk Elf Stealth

Benefit: You gain proficiency with simple and military light blades, and you gain a +2 feat bonus to damage rolls with these weapons. The bonus increases to +3 at 11th level and +4 at 21st level.

Gathering Night

Prerequisite: Dusk Elf Stealth

Benefit: Whenever you take the total defense action while you have any concealment, you become invisible until the start of your next turn.

Gloaming Ward

Prerequisite: Dusk Elf Stealth

Benefit: The first time you are bloodied in an encounter, you gain concealment until the end of your next turn.

Sehanine's Boon

Prerequisite: Dusk Elf Stealth

Benefit: Whenever you spend a healing surge while you have total concealment, you regain extra hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Umbral Wind

Prerequisite: Dusk Elf Stealth

Benefit: When you use your second wind, you gain concealment until the end of your next turn instead of gaining a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn. If you already have concealment, you instead gain total concealment.

Darkening Blade

"I am the dark of the new moon. My sword is the sharp crescent that heralds the doom you have earned."

Prerequisite: Dusk Elf Stealth feat

Gloaming guardians protect their communities from intruders and occasional trespassers, but even the barrier they create cannot catch all who prowl their lands. Should their communities come under attack, the dusk elves flee, vowing vengeance on those who wrong them. The darkening blades embody the vengeance they swear and to them the dusk elves turn to destroy their enemies.

As a darkening blade, you have mastered a secret fighting style perfected through generations spent in exile. Shadows gather around you so that when you move, you blend into them, making it hard for your enemies to track your movements and attack you. When you strike, you do so with speed and accuracy, darting in, then melding into the gloom.

Darkening Blade Path Features

Gloaming Action (11th level): Whenever you spend an action point to make an extra attack, you can shift your speed into a space adjacent to your target before the attack.

Night Eyes (11th level): Whenever you have total concealment, you also have darkvision.

Flitting Shadows (16th level): When you charge or run, you are treated as being insubstantial for the purposes of taking damage from opportunity attacks.

Darkening Blade Powers

Vanishing Cut — Darkening Blade Attack 11

Your attack slashes the foe, but before it can respond, you disappear into swirling darkness.

Encounter ✦ Illusion, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and you become invisible to the target until the end of your next turn.

Gloaming Shroud — Darkening Blade Utility 12

Light flees when shadows envelop you to whisk you to safety.

Encounter ✦ Illusion
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You miss with an attack
Effect: You shift 3 squares and gain concealment until the end of your next turn.

Blinding Assailant — Darkening Blade Attack 20

You strike and dance away, eluding a foe's counterattacks even as you set up your next strike.

Daily ✦ Illusion, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and you become invisible to the target (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: You can shift 1 square. Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target moves or shifts while it is adjacent to you, it takes damage equal to your Dexterity modifier, and you can shift 1 square as a free action.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power™ 2*, *Draconomicon™ 2*, and *Primal Power™*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

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Channel Divinity: The Traveler

By Chris Sims
Illustrations by Tyler Jacobson

"We were their saviors, so they asked us to stay and to be their lords. Perhaps even their gods. But I told them they should not put their faith in other mortals so, pointing to their shamed lord and their fat priest. Then the east whispered of mystery to me, so we set our feet to the road again. That night, we saw smoke in the west. I dreamed of burning temples and a gallows song on the wind."

Change is certain. Change leads to need. Need breeds invention and transformation. Adaptability is required. This wayward circle is the eternal path of the Traveler, and so it is the path of those who follow the so-called Giver of Gifts. Such followers go wherever the uncertain guidance of the Traveler leads them.

Background: Mad Wanderer

Those who truly devote themselves to the ways of the Traveler roam the world, accomplishing such tasks as they find need doing. They manipulate their foes into disarray before striking. Their actions sometimes seem amoral, but this is often because the observer cannot see the deeds' ultimate ends. Rather than accept praise or blame, these wanderers disappear as soon as mystical whim moves them onward. How has this itinerant lifestyle affected you? What do you care about, since you have no roots? What methods do you use to determine the direction you take or deeds you do? Do you assume, like many other Traveler devotees, that your mere presence in a situation suggests you are meant to act as an instrument of change?

Associated Skills: Bluff, Stealth

Paragon Tier Feat

The feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Traveler's Celerity [Divinity]

Prerequisite: 11th-level, Channel Divinity class feature, must worship the Traveler

Benefit: You gain the Channel Divinity power *Traveler's celerity.*

Channel Divinity: Traveler's Celerity — **Feat Power**

The Traveler blesses those in a bind with an easy escape and fleet feet. Those who fail to make use of this gift suffer for it.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You or one ally in burst
Effect: The target gains a +2 bonus to speed until the end of your next turn, and it can make a saving throw against each slowed, immobilized, or restrained effect. If the target saves, the condition ends even if a save doesn't normally end the condition.

Traveler's Harlequin

"I am the fingers of the thief in the marketplace. I am the song that moves your bones without your will. I am the one without shape, whom you fear. I am the luck of the daring that, upon our meeting, you have lost."

Prerequisite: Trained in Bluff, must have more than one class, must worship the Traveler

The Traveler is the true lord of Eberron, because his feet have treaded all its paths, and his eyes have seen all its sights. Her smiling face and dark cunning have left all she beheld transformed. It, this god, has guided your straying feet onward with only the revelation of the next day's happenings as your goal. You have wrought change as change will alongside your companions. And such change is always for the better, just as action is better than inaction. You know this well.

An instigator among your allies, you move the tale ever forward. The Traveler's voice always calls you onward, from over the next hill or through the next door. With cunning, you rely on the strengths of you and your allies, and you use them all to manipulate your foes into the weakest position. What you lack, you make up for with resourcefulness, unpredictability, and sheer luck.

Traveler's Harlequin Path Features

Traveler's Gift of Action (11th level): Whenever you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can roll one attack roll or skill check required by that action twice and use either result. If that attack roll or skill check misses or fails, you must roll your next attack roll or skill check twice and use the lower result.

Master of Many Paths (11th level): You can choose class-specific multiclass feats from more than one class. You gain one additional feat, which must be a class-specific multiclass feat.

Traveler's Fickle Favor (16th level): After each extended rest, roll a d12 and record the result. Until you take another extended rest, whenever you roll this same number on an attack roll, ability or skill check, or saving throw (before adding modifiers), you can reroll and use either result.

Traveler's Unpredictable Power (20th level): You gain the 20th-level power of any other paragon path for which you qualify or a 19th-level daily attack power from one of your classes.

Traveler's Harlequin Powers

Traveler's Mummery **Traveler's Harlequin Attack 11**

Your free spirit swells outward as you mock your foes and caper about the area. They follow your pantomime like puppets, and your allies follow them.

Encounter ✦ Charm, Divine, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Effect: Before the attack, you shift 2 squares.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Your highest ability + 6 vs. Will
Level 21: Your highest ability + 9 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + your highest ability modifier psychic damage, and you slide the target 2 squares, and one ally in the burst can shift 2 squares.

Shape of the Traveler Traveler's Harlequin Utility 12

They say the Traveler walks the world unrecognized because it can appear as anyone. You can do much the same.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Polymorph
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You alter your physical form to take on the appearance of any humanoid of Small or Medium size. Your clothing and equipment change size to fit you, but your statistics do not change. The new form lasts until you return to your natural form as a minor action or use this power again. Any creature that attempts to see through your ruse makes an Insight check opposed by your Bluff check, and you gain a +5 bonus to your check.

Same Rules, Different Deity

In other campaign settings, the character elements in this article can still apply. Sehanine or Avandra are closest to the Traveler among the core D&D deities. Sehanine has more of the shapechanging and trickster flair, while Avandra has the "take your fate into your own hands" and "nothing is permanent" themes down. Brandobaris, free-spirited exarch of Sheela and thereby Chauntea, is the most likely counterpart to the Traveler in Faerûn.

Other Character Elements

Consider character elements that let you change your appearance, mess around with probabilities, deceive others, and/or move freely. When possible, change the flavor to support your idea of the Traveler. If any requirement on a character element requires you to worship another deity, ask your DM if you can change that deity to the Traveler. Here are some examples.

Paragon Paths	
Assassin: Obsidian Stalker	*Dragon 379*
Avenger: Unveiled Visage	*Player's Handbook 2*
Avenger: Weapon of Fortune	*Divine Power*
Barbarian: Wildrunner	*Player's Handbook 2*
Bard: Cunning Prevaricator	*Player's Handbook 2*
Bard: Karmic Shaper	*Arcane Power*
Bard: Student of the Seven	*Player's Handbook 2*
Druid: Blood Moon Stalker	*Player's Handbook 2*
Druid: Spiral Wind's Ally	*Primal Power*
Druid: Whirling Samara	*Primal Power*
Gnome: Fey Beguiler	*Player's Handbook 2*
Human: Adroit Explorer	*Player's Handbook 2*
Paladin: Gray Guard	*Divine Power*
Paladin: Questing Knight	*Divine Power*
Ranger: Horizon Walker	*Martial Power*
Ranger: Pathfinder	*Player's Handbook*
Rogue: Daring Acrobat	*Player's Handbook*
Rogue: Gatecrasher	*Manual of the Planes*
Rogue: Master Infiltrator	*Player's Handbook*
Shadar-Kai: Abiding Reaper	*Dragon Annual*
Shaman: Disciple of the Winds	*Primal Power*
Shaman: Seasons' Herald	*Primal Power*
Swordmage: Ghost Blade	*Arcane Power*
Swordmage: Sage of Fate's Bonds	*Arcane Power*
Warden: Child of the North Wind	*Primal Power*
Warlock: Hexer	*Arcane Power*
Warlock: Planeshifter	*Arcane Power*
Warlord: Borderlands Marshal	*Martial Power*
Warlord: Commando Captain	*Martial Power*
Warlord: Twiceborn Leader	*Martial Power*
Wizard: Arcane Wayfarer	*Arcane Power*
Wizard: Unseen Mage	*Arcane Power*
Wizard: Weaver of Chance	*Arcane Power*

Epic Destinies	
Dark Wanderer	*Martial Power*
Deadly Trickster	*Player's Handbook*
Eternal Seeker	*Player's Handbook*
Free Soul	*Dragon 376*
Harbinger of Doom	*Player's Handbook 2*
Keybearer	*Dragon 372*
Lord of Fate	*Arcane Power*
Mythic Spirit	*Primal Power*
Reincarnate Champion	*Primal Power*
Revered One	*Player's Handbook 2*

Magic Items and Boons	
Avandra's Boon of Escape	*Dungeon Master's Guide 2*
Avandra's Ring	*Adventurer's Vault*
Avandra's Whisper	*Adventurer's Vault*
Boots of Caiphon	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Boots of the Fencing Master	*Adventurer's Vault*
Boots of Surging Speed	*Dungeon Master's Guide 2*
Choker of Eloquence	*Adventurer's Vault*
Cil Lyre	*Player's Handbook 2*
Defiant Boots	*Adventurer's Vault*
Diplomat's Table	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Eyes of Deception	*Adventurer's Vault*
Face-Stealing Ring	*Adventurer's Vault*
False Blood Amulet	*Seekers of the Ashen Crown*
Feinting Gloves	*Adventurer's Vault*
Fickle Twilight Totem	*Eberron Player's Guide*
Flute of the Dancing Satyr	*Player's Handbook 2*
Fragrance of Authority	*Adventurer's Vault*
Gambler's Weapon	*Adventurer's Vault*
Gem of Colloquy	*Adventurer's Vault*
Goblin Stompers	*Adventurer's Vault*
Great Cat Armor	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Hat of Disguise	*Adventurer's Vault*
Hexer's Rod	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Imposter's Armor	*Adventurer's Vault*
Ioun Stone of Perfect Language	*Adventurer's Vault*
Liar's Trinket	*Adventurer's Vault*
Luckbender Gloves	*Adventurer's Vault*
Luring Withdrawal Armor	*Player's Handbook 2*
Moonlight	*Adventurer's Vault*
Potion of Mimicry	*Adventurer's Vault*
Pouncing Beast Armor	*Player's Handbook 2*
Radiant Temple Uniform	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Ring of Freedom of Movement	*Adventurer's Vault*
Ring of the Forgetful Touch	*Adventurer's Vault*
Robe of Avoidance	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Sandals of Avandra	*Adventurer's Vault*
Sehanine's Mark of the Dark Moon	*Adventurer's Vault*
Serpentskin Armor	*Adventurer's Vault*
Shadowdancer's Mask	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Shroud of Ravens	*Adventurer's Vault 2*
Skald's Armor	*Player's Handbook 2*
Staff of the Blinking Artifice	*Eberron Player's Guide*
Stone of Avandra	*Adventurer's Vault*
Trickster's Mask	*Adventurer's Vault*
Whistle of Warning	*Adventurer's Vault 2*

About the Author

The most mysterious of the Nine-and-Six, **Chris Sims** is neither child nor parent to any other god in the collected pantheon. He is the only god said to walk the face of Eberron in body, as well as spirit, but his mastery of form prevents any mortal from ever recognizing him. The sovereign of cunning, invention, and transformation, Chris Sims is patron to all who embrace change, whether physical or philosophical. He has contributed to D&D works too numerous to mention here.

Dark Awakenings

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Camping in a world full of supernatural dangers is rarely safe. You're about to find out why.

by Chris Sims

illustrations by Wayne England

cartography by Jason A. Engle

Play Materials

This adventure assumes you are familiar with the D&D game rules. It also assumes you have access to the rules from the *Player's Handbook* or the D&D Test Drive. All other information you need is provided here.

Basic Setup

✦ Create a 1st-level character or use one of those provided with this adventure. Do not equip your character with more than weapons and armor. Your character also starts with two *healing potions* on your belt, or one if your role is leader. You may find other useful items as you adventure.

✦ You also have access to Splug, your character's goblin sidekick, during some or all of the encounters. Familiarize yourself with Splug (see page 87). Splug looks to your character for guidance and protection, but he can be helpful in the quest, especially if your character is a leader or someone who benefits from combat advantage or similar tactical edges.

✦ The adventure refers to your character and Splug as "heroes." Whenever you see that word or a variation of it such as "hero," the adventure is talking about your character and/or Splug.

Basic Play

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Basic Monster Tactics. Specific encounters expand on these assumptions. The Monster Abilities section is only important if you need to know more about a creature's specific capabilities during an encounter.

The adventure includes small maps you can print out and markers for the heroes and the monsters. Use these to help you play.

Unless otherwise indicated by circumstances, you can take as many short rests as you want in a given area when no monsters are nearby to bother you. **You cannot take an extended rest during this adventure.**

Keep a record of what you leave behind and where. If you return to an area where you left items, they will probably still be there.

If your character falls unconscious and Splug cannot rescue you, your adventure is over. If Splug might rescue you, attempt death saving throws as normal and act as Splug until your character regains consciousness. If an encounter ends and you are unconscious, assume Splug wakes you up.

The numbered paragraphs which describe your choices during the adventure are gathered at the end.

When you're ready, go to encounter 1, page 77.

Encounter Format

Setup: This section tells you what's in an encounter and how to begin it. It also describes the initial situation.

Options: During an encounter, you can try any options shown here in addition to normal combat rules options.

Monster Statistics Blocks: These are essentially monster character sheets used to run the monster during a fight.

Monster Tactics: In addition to the Basic Monster Tactics, use these to determine how the monsters act.

Features of the Area: If you need to know how terrain or another aspect of the encounter area works and that information isn't in your Options, look here.

Conclusion: For more options after combat concludes, see this section.

Basic Monster Tactics

During play, you move and act for your character normally, but you also move the monsters and carry out their actions. Here are some guidelines that apply to every encounter.

✦ Specific tactics refer to "targets." Unless your character is controlling a monster through the use of a power, the monster considers heroes to be targets. If your character is controlling a monster, you determine what it considers to be a target while you control the monster.

✦ Consult the area map in each encounter for the starting location of the heroes and the monsters.

✦ When combat begins, roll initiative for each hero and each monster. Record the initiative order.

✦ Monsters move as needed to place themselves so they can attack. If they have ranged attacks, they will stay as far away as possible while still being in close range. If they have only melee attacks, they try to move adjacent. They always attack the nearest target. If heroes are equally close, the monster attacks or moves toward your character.

✦ Avoid moving or acting in any way that provokes opportunity attacks or triggers marks unless the monster has no other option.

✦ Monsters always try to move or shift into flanking positions for their melee attacks when possible.

✦ Specific tactics might tell you a monster attacks a random target among multiple targets. If this happens, roll 1d6. On a result of 1–3, the monster attacks your character; on a result of 4–6, the monster attacks Splug.

Monster Abilities

Here are a few definitions of monster abilities for your reference while playing this adventure.

Blindsight goes out to an indicated number of squares. Within the given number of squares, blindsight allows a monster to "see" creatures and objects even if it's blind and even if the subject is hidden or invisible.

A **blind** creature relies on special senses, such as blindsight, to see within a specified range, beyond which the creature can't see. The creature is immune to gaze attacks and cannot be blinded. It can hear where a hero is and move to attack that hero, unless the hero succeeds on a Stealth check opposed by the monster's Perception check.

A creature that has a **climb speed** can move on vertical surfaces at that speed without making Athletics checks to climb. While climbing, the creature ignores difficult terrain and doesn't grant combat advantage because of climbing. Spider climb allows the creature to travel along surfaces such as ceilings without making any check.

A creature that has a **fly speed** without (hover) flies 2 or more squares on each of its turns. If it cannot do so, it crashes to the ground, landing prone. While flying, such a creature can neither make opportunity attacks nor shift. It only provokes opportunity attacks for leaving its starting square each turn.

Hover allows a creature that has a fly speed to shift and make opportunity attacks while flying. It can also keep flying without moving on its turn. It still crashes if knocked prone and provokes opportunity attacks for leaving a starting square without shifting.

A monster's encounter power can only be used once per encounter, just like a hero's encounter power.

If a creature is **immune** to something, it takes no damage from attacks that deal that type of damage.

Resist indicates a number and a damage type. If an attack that has the indicated damage type hits the monster, reduce the damage by that amount (minimum 0 damage).

Encounter 1

Setup

Read:

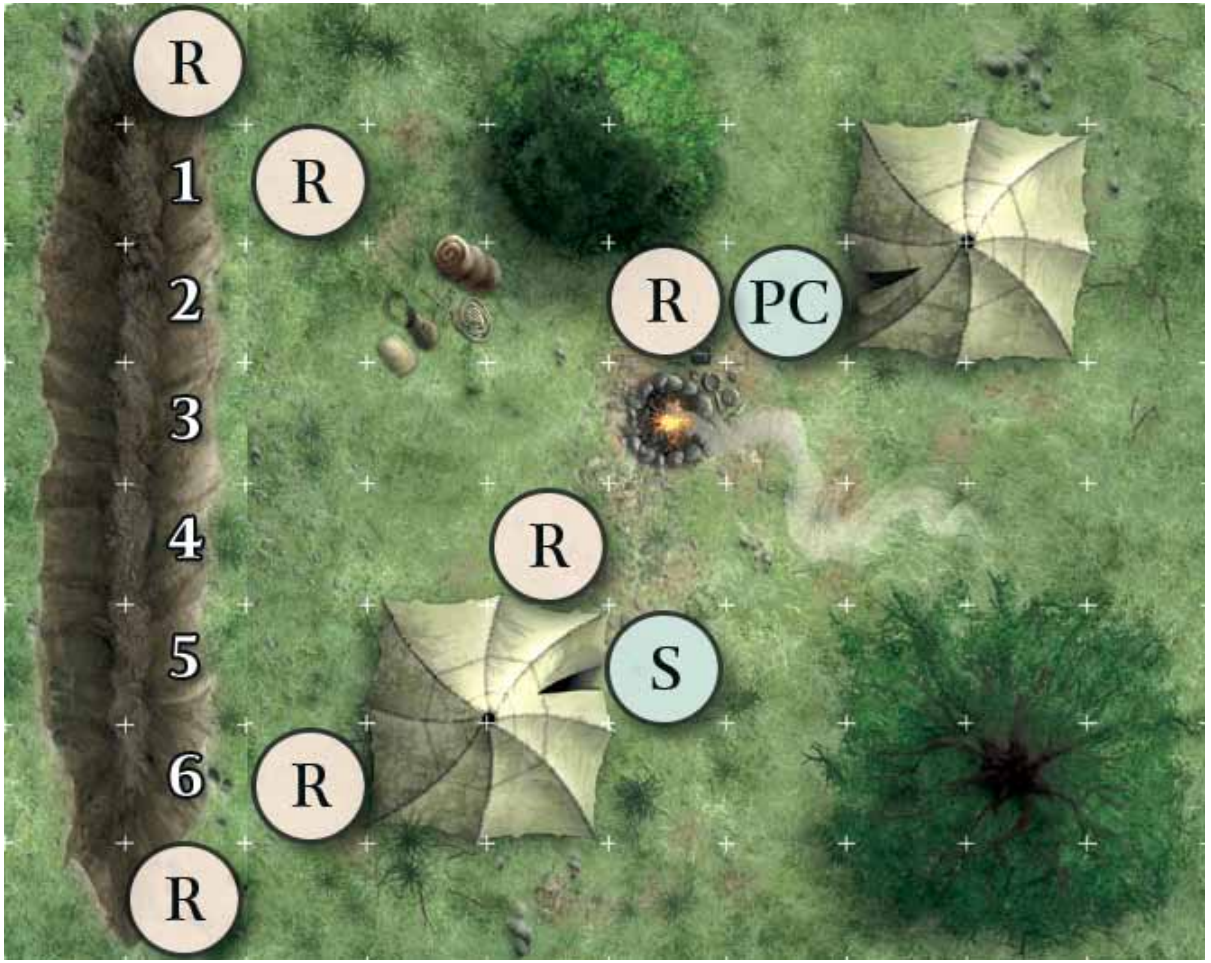
You dream of shaking earth and screams, the smell of rot and dark laughter. Burning eyes glare back at you in the dream. The vision changes with the smell of turned earth and wet leaves and a crushing weight on your chest. You feel warmth nearby and see a source of blurred, yellow light. Then something cracks loudly, followed by a shrill scream.

You wake with a start, still in your bedroll, and realize a thin, black root grasps you by your legs and torso. It's pulling you toward a large chasm in the ground on one side of what appears to be a ransacked campsite under a looming hillside on all sides except the east. The warm light turns out to be a campfire in the dimness of dawn, crackling as it slowly dies. Other roots reach out through the camp.

You remember that someone else should be here, your companions, but you know little else, especially why you're here. Another shrill scream draws your eye to a small form struggling with another vine. It's a goblin in rather fine clothing and armor for his ilk.

His bulging eyes fall on you. "Please help poor Splug! Please!" He says a name, and you remember that it's yours and that Splug is your friend. You and he are about 15 or 20 feet from the edge of the hole. It's time to act.

- ✦ Splug (S)
- ✦ You (PC)
- ✦ 6 tainted roots (R)



At the start of the battle, heroes have no weapon drawn. Combat begins now, and it ends only if you defeat all the monsters or you are defeated. Alternatively, if you're not grabbed, you can run away—see Conclusion.

Options

Campfire: If a creature enters the campfire square, go to 065, page 92.

Chasm: You can look into the chasm from an adjacent square. See Conclusion.

Knowledge Checks: You can take a minor action to assess your situation with a DC 15 Arcana (trained only), Dungeoneering, or Nature skill check. If you

succeed on an Arcana check, go to 133, page 98. If you succeed on a Nature or Dungeoneering check, go to 027, page 89. If you fail, you learn nothing useful and cannot use the same skill again for this purpose in this encounter.

Tents: If a hero is adjacent to a tent and has a free hand, the hero can grab a tent as a minor action. If you do, go to 103, page 96.

Trees: If a hero is adjacent to a tree and has a free hand, the hero can grab a tree as a minor action. If this happens, go to 081, page 94.

6 Tainted Roots (R)	**Level 1 Controller Minion**
Medium aberrant animate (blind, plant)	XP 25 each
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +6; blindsight 5
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	
Speed 2, climb 2 (spider climb)	
⊕ **Grasp** (standard; must not be grabbing an enemy; at-will)	
Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 4 damage, and the target is grabbed and pulled adjacent to the root.	
⸸ **Drag** (standard; at-will)	
Targets an enemy grabbed by the tainted root; +5 vs. Fortitude; 2 damage, and the tainted root shifts 1 square and slides the target 1 square to a square adjacent to the tainted root.	
Snaky Body	
A tainted root ignores difficult terrain.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 4 (-3)

Monster Tactics

When a tainted root has a standard action, is adjacent to one or more targets, and it isn't grabbing a target, it makes a *grasp* attack against a random adjacent target. If the tainted root is grabbing a target, it makes a *drag* attack against that target.

A tainted root attempts to *drag* a target it is grabbing into the chasm. When a hero falls (or jumps) into the chasm, make note of the number of the square where that hero fell. If you fall in before Splug, go to 007, page 88. If Splug falls in before you, go to 022, page 89. If you fall or jump in anytime thereafter, make a note of the numbered square you fall or jump into, then go to 058, page 92.

A tainted root does not willingly enter the campfire square.

Features of the Area

Campfire: The campfire is dying but hot. It illuminates the campsite with bright light.

Tents: Corners of a tent do not block movement, but tent squares are difficult terrain. A creature inside a tent cannot be attacked unless its attacker is inside the tent, too.

Trees: Tree squares are difficult terrain.

Conclusion

Chasm: If you investigate the chasm, go to 131, page 98.

Run Away: You can run away to the east. If you do, go to 014, page 89.

Search the Campsite: If you take a moment to search the campsite, go to 113, page 96.

Encounter 2

Setup

Leaving Splug Alone: If Splug spent more than 3 rounds in this encounter alone, go to 052, page 91.

When you arrive and look around, read:

You're in a large cave. Ambient green light allows you to see clearly. The chasm is above you now, an opening in the cave roof about 10 feet up. You're in a luminous green stream of water that flows from a hole in the northern cave wall, and the cave slopes upward toward that direction. The current is pretty strong. Part of the cave to the west is obviously hewn stone, and another stream flows from that passage. From your vantage, you can't see much of that tunnel.

With a squelching sound, a sickly-looking blue ooze surfaces and starts to approach. Movement in other parts of the cave indicates more creatures, including a couple of those black, mobile roots near the southern wall. The stream plunges into another cavern there, roiling fiercely.

Nearby, a long, inanimate root dangles in the water, looking like you could swing on it or hold onto it.

- ✦ 2 tainted roots (R)
- ✦ 4 tainted oozes (O)
- ✦ Stream exit (X)
- ✦ Dangling Root (D)

Combat begins now.

Rushing Stream

The stream is a hazard to all creatures except the oozes.

Rushing Stream

The stream drags you toward the cavern into which the water flows.

Trigger: A creature starts its turn in the water.
Attack: +5 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target slides 2 squares toward the "X" squares, ending the slide in a water square.

If a hero starts a turn in an X square, the hero is subject to the attack (Splug first). If the attack hits you, go to 083, page 94. If the attack hits Splug, go to 064, page 92.

Options

Dangling Root: If a hero is adjacent to a root and has a free hand, the hero can grab the root as a minor action (go to 018, page 89, to do so). The root also looks like a hero could swing on it; to try, go to 089, page 94. A hero can also climb up the root; go to 031, page 90, to do that.

Knowledge Checks: You can take a minor action to assess your situation with a DC 15 Arcana (trained only), Dungeoneering, or Nature skill check. If you succeed on an Arcana check, go to 122, page 97. If you succeed on a Nature or Dungeoneering check, go to 048, page 91. If you fail, you learn nothing useful and cannot use the same skill again for this purpose in this encounter.

Northern Passage: If you move so you have clear line of sight into the northern passage, go to 039, page 90.

Rope: If you dropped a rope into the cavern, heroes can climb back up it (go to 073, page 93). Any monsters left here give pursuit.

Monster Tactics

Tainted Roots

Whenever a tainted root is adjacent to one or more targets, has a standard action, and it isn't grabbing a target, it makes a *grasp* attack against a random adjacent target. If the tainted root is grabbing a target, it makes a *drag* attack against that target.

A tainted root does not move, so it will start its next turn in water unless it is grabbing a target. It climbs to avoid the water.

A tainted root attempts to *drag* a target it is grabbing into the water close to a stream exit square (X).

Tainted Oozes

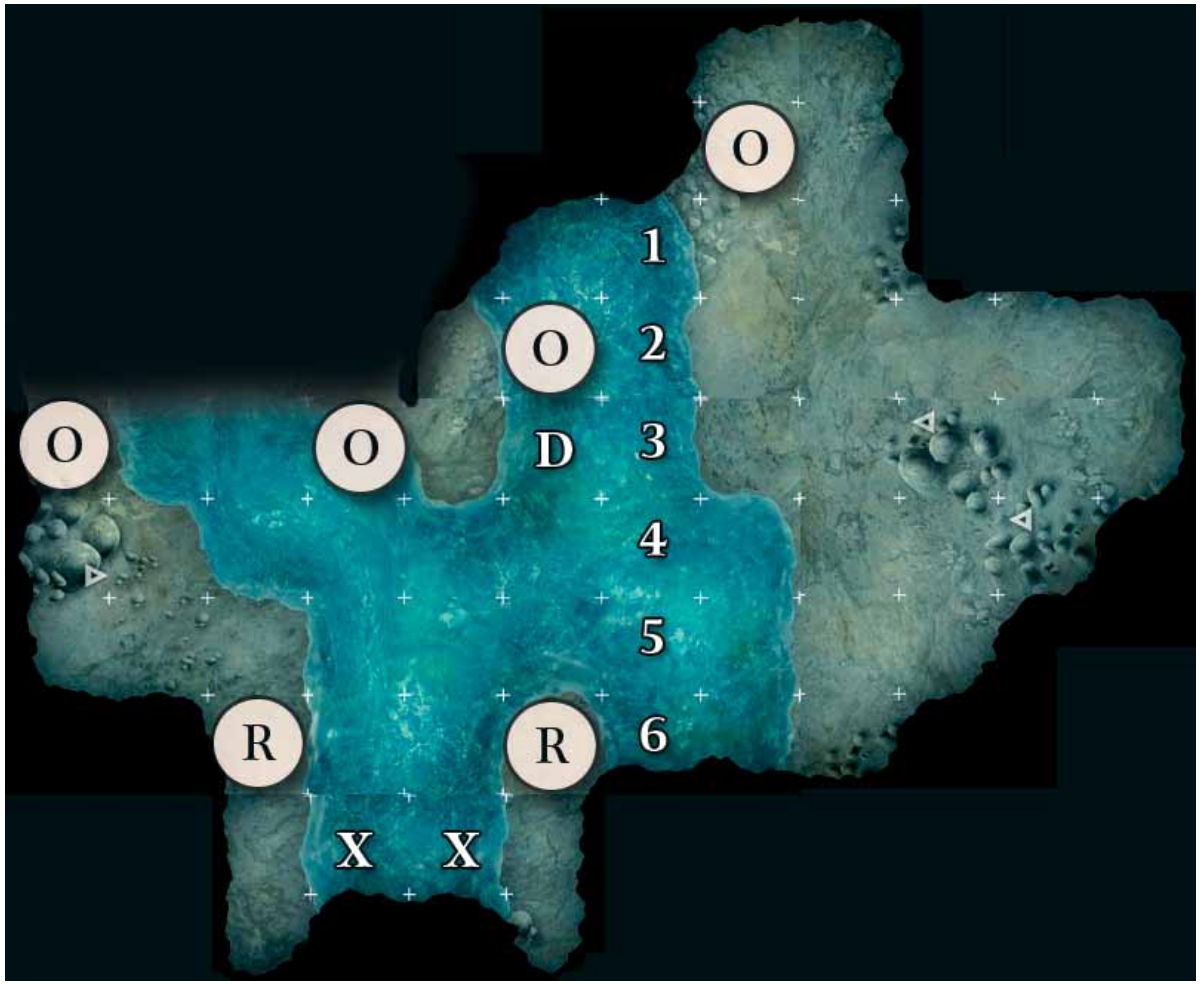
Whenever a tainted ooze is adjacent to one or more targets and has a standard action, it makes a slam attack against a random adjacent target. If it hits, it slides the target toward a square marked X.

Features of the Area

Rough Rocks: Rock squares marked with triangles (▲) are difficult terrain.

2 Tainted Roots (R)		Level 1 Minion Controller
Medium aberrant animate (blind, plant)		XP 25 each
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +6; blindsight 5	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12		
Speed 2, climb 2 (spider climb)		
ⓘ **Grasp** (standard; must not be grabbing an enemy; at-will)		
Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 4 damage, and the target is grabbed and pulled adjacent to the root.		
⸸ **Drag** (standard; at-will)		
Targets an enemy grabbed by the tainted root; +5 vs. Fortitude; 2 damage, and the tainted root shifts 1 square and slides the target 1 square to a square adjacent to the tainted root.		
Snaky Body		
A tainted root ignores difficult terrain.		
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –	
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 17 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 1 (-5)	**Cha** 4 (-3)

4 Tainted Oozes (O)		Level 1 Minion Controller
Medium aberrant animate (blind, ooze)		XP 25 each
Initiative +2	**Senses** Perception +4; blindsight 5	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 13; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12		
Immune gaze, pull/push/slide; **Resist** 5 acid		
Speed 4, climb 2, swim 2		
ⓘ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**		
+4 vs. Fortitude; 3 acid damage, and the target slides 2 squares.		
Oozy Body		
A tainted ooze ignores difficult terrain.		
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –	
Str 12 (+1)	**Dex** 14 (+2)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 16 (+3)	**Int** 1 (-5)	**Cha** 1 (-5)



Conclusion

Frog Pipe: Investigate the sparkly eyes by going to 043, page 91. A hero can climb into this pipe from an adjacent square by going to 108, page 96.

Investigation: You can attempt the same knowledge checks detailed in the Options section. You can also search the area by making a Perception check and going to 015, page 89.

Rope: If you climbed down into this area using a rope, see options. Also, if you tied the rope to the tree closest to the chasm in encounter 1, you can cut off 20 feet of excess rope and carry it with you.

Stream Exit: Someone standing adjacent to the X squares can easily see an open cavern with light at the other end. A hero can dive through by attempting an Athletics check and going to 026, page 89.

Encounter 3

Setup

Heroes arrive in the Start Area.

Leaving Splug Alone: If Splug spent more than 2 rounds in this encounter alone, go to 001, page 88.

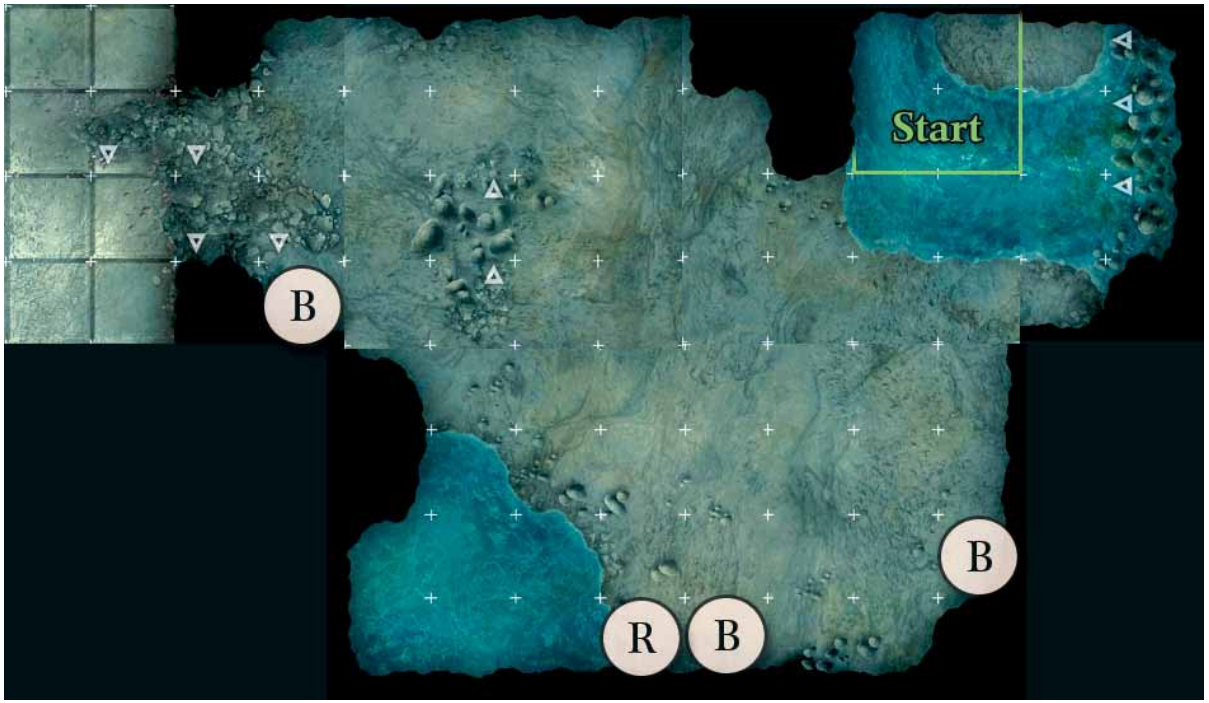
When you arrive, read:

You've arrived in another natural cave illuminated by green light. A glowing green stream flows into the chamber at the northwest and flows out again through a gravel-filled opening in the east. A pool of similar liquid has collected in the southwestern corner, bubbling and churning as if disturbed from underneath. Other than some rubble, the room's only other feature is the broken wall to the west, leading to what looks like a landing of worked stone.

Near the pool along the southern wall, you spot a black, plantlike pod with writhing tendrils much like the tainted roots you've fought before. A chirping sound, barely audible above the water's gurgling, draws your attention to sizable green bats hanging on the walls.

- ✦ 3 tainted bats (B)
- ✦ 1 tainted root pod (R)

Be sure to remember any effect the swim into this room had on the heroes. When the heroes arrive, it's clear the monsters aren't immediately aware of intruders. Each hero can attempt a Stealth check by going to 085, page 94, or you can begin combat normally.



Options

Glowing Pool: If a monster enters the pool, go to 046, page 91. You can use a standard action to throw, drop, or poke an object, such as a loose rock from the floor, into the pool by going to 119, page 97. When any hero first enters the pool, go to 90, page 95. When a hero starts a turn in the pool, go to 030, page 90.

Knowledge Checks: You can take a minor action to assess your situation with a DC 15 Arcana (trained only), Dungeoneering, or Nature check. If you succeed on an Arcana check, go to 005, page 88. If you succeed on a Nature or Dungeoneering check, go to 051, page 91. If you fail, you learn nothing useful and cannot use the same skill again for this purpose in this encounter.

Worked Stone Area: When you move adjacent to this area, attempt a Perception check and go to 114, page 96. If a hero enters or touches a square in this area, assuming you know nothing to the contrary, go to 097, page 95.

3 Tainted Bats (B)	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Small aberrant beast	XP 25 each
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +1; blindsight 3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 13; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	
Speed 1, fly 6	
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)	
The tainted bat flies 6 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. It doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 8 (-1)	**Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-2)

Tainted Root Pod (R)	Level 2 Controller
Medium aberrant beast (blind, plant)	XP 125
Initiative +1	**Senses** Perception +3; blindsight 5
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	
Speed 4	
⊕ **Root Lash** (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed. The tainted root pod can grab one target at time.	
Constrict (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature the tainted vine pod is grabbing; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the vine pod sustains the grab.	
Pulling Roots (move; at-will)	
The tainted root pod shifts 2 squares and slides any creature grabbed by it 2 squares into a square adjacent to it.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 14 (+4)	**Dex** 17 (+1) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 10 (+4)	**Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)

Monster Tactics

Tainted Bats

Instead of moving as basic monster tactics dictate, a tainted bat uses *flyby attack* whenever possible.

If it crashes, the tainted bat stands up on its turn, then it attacks from the ground if flying away would provoke opportunity attacks. It flies again as soon as it can do so without provoking an opportunity attack.

Tainted Root Pod

Whenever the tainted root pod has one or more targets in reach, is not grabbing a target, and has a standard action, it makes a *root lash* attack against a random adjacent target.

Whenever the tainted root pod has a target grabbed and has a standard action, it uses *constrict* on the target it is grabbing.

Whenever the tainted root pod grabs a target or is grabbing a target, it uses *pulling roots* as its move action that turn. It pulls the grabbed target toward the worked stone area to the west. If it successfully pulls a hero to that area, go to 097, page 95.

Features of the Area

Glowing Pool: Pool squares are difficult terrain.

Rough Rocks: Rock squares marked with triangles (▲) are difficult terrain.

Stream: The stream squares in the north are difficult terrain.

Conclusion

Glowing Pool: See Options.

Investigation: You can attempt the same knowledge checks detailed in the Options section. You can also search the area by making a Perception check and going to 075, page 93.

Tainted Root Pod: If you kill the pod, go to 024, page 89.

Worked Stone Area: See Options.

Encounter 4

Setup

When you arrive and get a look around, read:
This chamber is shaped like one-quarter of a circle with a small chamber attached in the west and an area of rune-covered stonework in a wide alcove to the east. Near the center of the arc of the western wall is a glowing circle of arcane sigils with drifts of dark dust on it. It illuminates the room with bright, blood-red light.

In the open doorway to the western chamber, a dark, thin humanoid sways, growls, and gurgles, its green glowing eyes sweeping the room. Behind it, the light of the sigil reveals a ladder in the shadows of the small chamber. Two shapes, each like the upper half of a human made of dark smoke, float in the corners.

The humanoid groans, and the wispy shapes shriek.

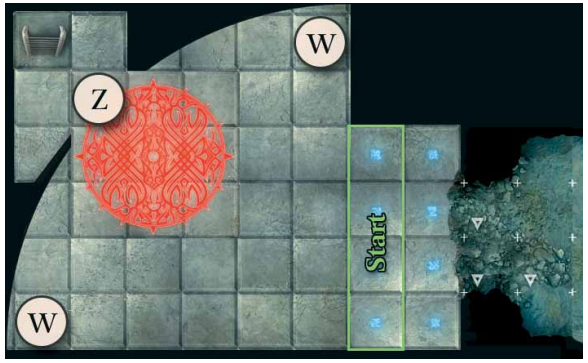
- ✦ 2 tainted wisps (W)
- ✦ 1 tainted zombie (Z)

This area is open to encounter area 3—you can connect the maps, if you want to do so, by laying the 8-square runed start area over the 8-square worked stone area of encounter 3.

Combat begins as soon as you enter this chamber.

Options

Knowledge Checks: You can take a minor action to assess your situation with a DC 15 Arcana (trained only) or Religion (trained only) check. If you succeed on the Arcana check, go to 136, page 98. If you succeed on the Religion check, go to 013, page 88. If you fail, you learn nothing useful and cannot use the same skill again for this purpose in this encounter.



Ladder: If a hero moves within 2 squares of the ladder, go to 068, page 92.

Sigil Circle: If a hero enters the circle—any square the circle touches—go to 104, page 96. If a hero hasn't entered the circle by the first time a monster attacks from a square the circle touches go to 099, page 95. When a wisp drops to 0 hit points or a hero dies in the circle, go to 034, page 90.

2 Tainted Wisps (W)		**Level 1 Minion Lurker**
Small aberrant magical beast		XP 25 each
Initiative +7	**Senses** Perception +2; darkvison	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see *incorporeal form.*		
AC 15; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed fly 6 (hover)		
⊕ **Tainted Caress** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**		
+5 vs. Reflex; 4 psychic damage.		
Incorporeal Form (when an attack hits the tainted wisp; encounter)		
Roll d20; on a 10+, the tainted wisp takes no damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** –	
Str 11 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 15 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	**Int** 4 (-3)	**Cha** 10 (+0)

Tainted Zombie (Z)		**Level 1 Brute**
Medium aberrant animate (undead)		XP 100
Initiative +2	**Senses** Perception +1; darkvision	
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15		
AC 13; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12		
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic		
Speed 4		
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
⸸ **Bite** (standard; at-will)		
Targets an immobilized creature; +4 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target is no longer immobilized.		
Zombie Weakness		
Any critical hit to the zombie reduces it to 0 hit points.		
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –	
Str 16 (+3)	**Dex** 14 (+2)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+1)	**Int** 2 (-4)	**Cha** 6 (-2)

Monster Tactics

Tainted Zombie

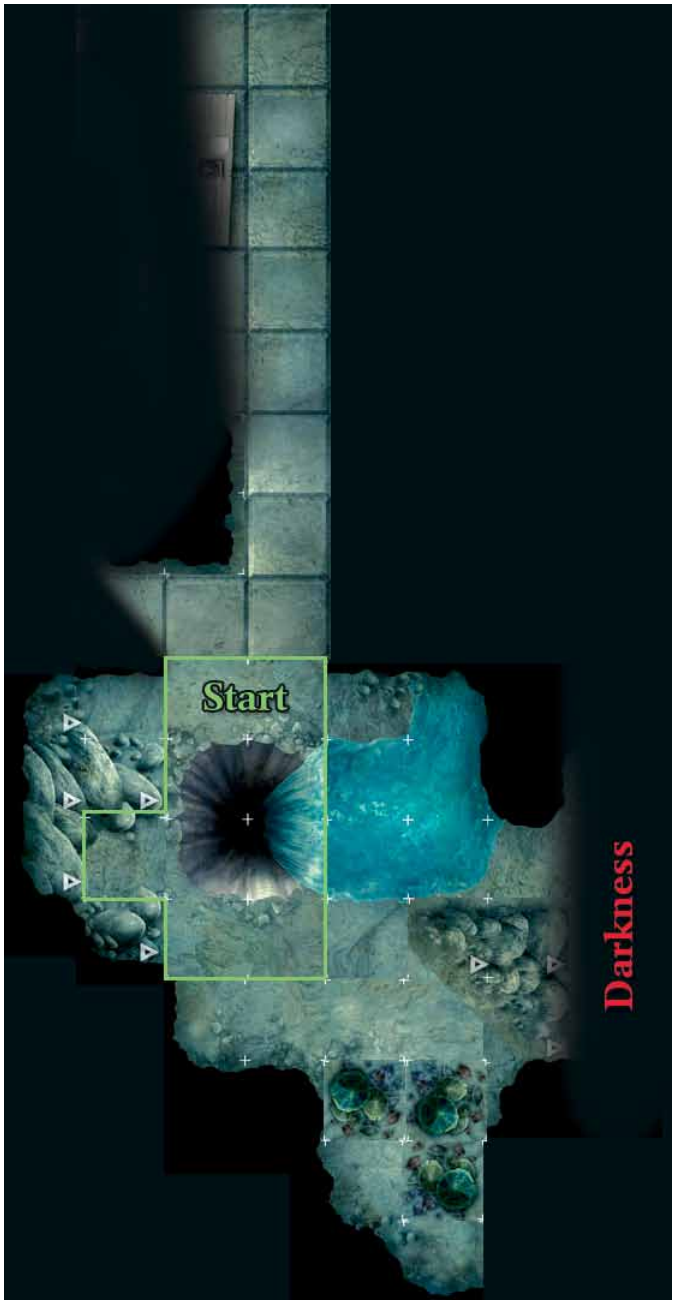
If the tainted zombie starts its turn adjacent to an immobilized target, the zombie uses its *bite* attack on that target.

If the tainted zombie is reduced to 0 hp, go to 082, page 94 when its next turn would start.

Conclusion

Ladder: If you haven't examined the ladder before now, you can move close to it and go to 068, page 92.

Investigation: You can attempt the same knowledge checks detailed in the Options section. You can also search the area by making a Perception check and going to 050, page 91.



Encounter 5

Setup

When you arrive, read:

This area is another natural cavern, with dim light coming from a nearby room of worked stone to the north. A natural column blocks your view of that area. Water cascades down the wall to the east and into the hole here. The terrain is rocky, and further to the east, a deep darkness pervades. Clusters of strange mushrooms grow to the south, lending a fungal smell to the wet scent of the cave. A strange, pungent odor that has an acidic edge seeps from the north.

If the hero that came up first has at least 15 feet of rope, the rope can be dropped to the other hero by going to 002, page 88.

Options

Darkness: If you have darkvision, go to 054, page 92. If you have a light source, go to 092, page 95. To enter the darkness with light, go to 036, page 90. To enter without light, go to 112, page 96. If you have reason to wonder whether monsters can see in the darkness, go to 125, page 97.

Mushrooms: These mushrooms smell earthy but pleasant. You can attempt a Nature or Dungeoneering check to examine them (standard action) by going to 057, page 92. You can taste one (go to 020, 19). Or you can ignore the mushrooms and get back to other options.

Worked Stone Area: If you look or move into this area, go to 049, page 91.

Features of the Area

Hole: This hole drops 15 feet (1d10 damage from a fall) to encounter 2, page 88.

Mushrooms: Mushrooms are normal terrain, but if a creature enters a mushroom square, go to 129, page 97.

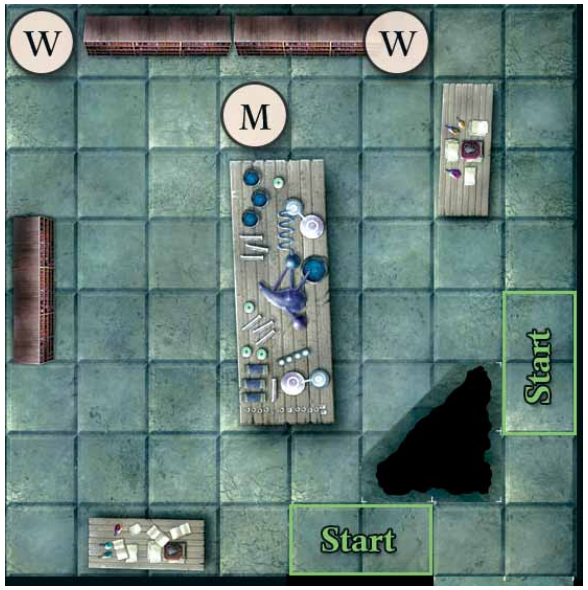
Rough Rocks: Rocks marked with triangles (▲) are difficult terrain.

Encounter 6

Setup

When you can see into the area, read:
This room is carved from the rock with hints that it too was once a natural cavern. Magical orbs of light floating in the northern corners reveal two small tables and a larger one, all of them covered in papers and strange glass devices and containers. To the west is a bookcase, filled floor to ceiling, in the center of the wall. On the northern wall is a much longer case filled with books, scrolls, and curiosities. To the south, the room has a natural column and opens into a cavern where you can hear water flowing.

A skeletally thin, gray-skinned humanoid in robes works at the long table in the center of the room. His eyes glow, and it seems unlikely he's alive.



Two shapes, each like the upper half of a human made of dark smoke, float along the northern wall, near the bookcase there.

- ✦ 1 mage wight (M)
- ✦ 2 tainted wisps (W)

Combat begins if you initiate it. You can instead wait, giving up any surprise you might have (go to 124, page 97).

Options

Knowledge Checks: You can take a minor action to assess your situation with a DC 15 Arcana (trained only) or Religion (trained only) check. If you succeed on the Arcana check, go to 010, page 88. If you succeed on the Religion check, go to 084, page 94. If you fail, you learn nothing useful and cannot use the same skill again for this purpose in this encounter.

Run Away: You can flee through any exit you know of. The monsters pursue you into the new area. For an example, see Southern Exit.

Southern Exit: You can take the fight through the southern exit. If you do, add the map and information for encounter 5 to this area. The monsters pursue fleeing heroes.

Tables: To move into a table square, you must clamber atop a table as a move action or jump onto the table as part of a move action. Jumping up on a table instead requires 1 square of movement (Athletics DC 12). Failing this check means you stop moving and your move action ends. If you fail by 5 or more, you also fall prone in the square you started the jump in. If you successfully move through table squares, go to 127, page 97.

Mage Wight (M) **Level 3 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (undead), wight XP 150
Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 46; **Bloodied** 23
AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic
Speed 6, climb 3
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 necrotic damage, and the mage wight pushes the target 2 squares. If the target is immobilized, it also loses a healing surge.
↗ **Deathchill Bolt** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
✧ **Spirit-Chilling Burst** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Close burst 2; targets immobilized enemies; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 cold and necrotic damage, the target loses a healing surge, and two deathchill wisps appear in squares adjacent to the target. The wisps act just after the mage wight in the initiative order. *Miss:* 1d6 + 3 cold and necrotic damage, and one deathchill wisp appears next to the target.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Arcana +9, Dungeoneering +5, Nature +5
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 9 (+0)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 16 (+4) **Cha** 18 (+5)

2 Tainted Wisps (W) **Level 1 Minion Lurker**
Small aberrant magical beast XP 25 each
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvison
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see *incorporeal form.*
AC 15; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Immune disease, poison
Speed fly 6 (hover)
⊕ **Tainted Caress** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+5 vs. Reflex; 4 psychic damage.
Incorporeal Form (when an attack hits the tainted wisp; encounter)
Roll d20; on a 10+, the tainted wisp takes no damage.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –
Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+2)
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 4 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Monster Tactics

Mage Wight

Use *deathchill bolt* if able to attack a target that isn't immobilized. Do so even if it might provoke an opportunity attack or another sort of attack. However, before using *deathchill bolt*, the wight tries to move so it won't be attacked for making this ranged attack.

Use *claw* only if unable to leave melee safely to use *deathchill bolt* or if the wight is adjacent to an immobilized target when it starts its turn.

Use *spirit-chilling burst* if the mage wight can attack all targets in the room by using the power.

Use *spirit-chilling burst* if the wight is bloodied, has access to the power, and has even one immobilized target.

As part of a move action, duck behind a table or bookcase to gain cover when possible.

Features of the Area

Bookcases: These floor-to-ceiling shelves are blocking terrain for determining cover.

Tables: A table is a low obstacle for determining cover.

Conclusion

If the heroes defeat the monsters, go to 059, page 92. If not, your adventure has ended in defeat.

Splug

Splug, Goblin Sidekick	Level 1 Striker
Small natural humanoid, goblin	
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13; **Healing Surges** 7	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	
Speed 6; see also *mobile attack* and *goblin tactics*	
⨁ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
➳ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 5/10; +8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Cringe (standard; at-will)	
Splug shrinks away from combat, gaining a +2 bonus to his defenses until the start of his next turn. An ally can make an at-will or charge attack as a free action in his stead.	
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	
Splug shifts 1 square.	
Combat Advantage	
Splug deals 1d6 extra damage when he hits a target he has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +7, Bluff +7, Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	**Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, longsword, 2 daggers, *healing potion*	

Playing Splug

On each of Splug's turns, he likes to use *cringe* when he's sure doing so will give you a free attack. To do so, Splug moves (or shifts, if that's safer) away from the monsters, then he uses his *cringe* power. If using *cringe* won't allow you to attack, Splug attacks with his longsword or dagger.

Splug prefers to move into positions that give him combat advantage against a target. He also prefers to attack targets granting him combat advantage.

Whenever he can help it, Splug avoids moving into a position where monsters are coming at him from two or more sides. He ignores this preference when he can gain combat advantage by doing so.

Splug won't voluntarily go anywhere alone or first. He also won't give you his equipment, although he will carry yours for you. During the game, you can try to convince Splug to do something he wouldn't normally do, such as give you his healing potion or climb into an unknown area ahead of you. To do so, note where you are, then go to 116, page 96.

Splug likes you. If you're unconscious and he has a *healing potion*, he does his best to administer the potion to you even at great risk to his own hide.

During a short rest, Splug heals to full normal hit points if he can do so. He likes to save one surge for an upcoming encounter, but he does so only if using that surge during combat might benefit him more than using it during the short rest.

About the Author

Chris Sims is a game designer whose recent credits include the 4th Edition *Monster Manual* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*, as well as the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

NUMBERED PARAGRAPHS

001: Splug signals you from his hiding place in the spot indicated on this map. The monsters haven't noticed him. Go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it.

002: The climb up the pipe on the rope requires no check to succeed. Go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

003: Splug disappears into the other cavern mentioned in the room's description. You can go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it, or you can instead follow Splug by going back to encounter 2, moving adjacent to the Stream Exit, and using that part of the Conclusion, page 80.

004: You throw the drink on a monster. Make this attack:

Voyvod's Drink

The sweet, green liquid hurtles at your foe.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 acid and poison damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and continue it.

005: Weak residual magic pervades the area, although the pool in this room seems particularly strong. The monsters have been tainted magically. If you spend a minor action to investigate further, go to 078, page 93. Otherwise, go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

006: The trap door opens easily, revealing a narrow passage that leads away into darkness. Mounting the ledge from the ladder to enter the passage requires a move action. If you proceed down the passage, go to 091, page 95. Or you can go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

007: You plummet into the chasm, falling into water, taking 1d10 damage from the fall, and landing prone. (If a tainted root is dragging you, it dies from the fall.) If the fall reduced you to 0 hit points, you quickly drown and your adventure is over. Otherwise, go to 086, page 94.

008: If each Stealth check result was 14 or higher, go to encounter 6, page 85, and start with surprise on your side. Otherwise, just go to encounter 6. Choose the western start area or northern start area, whichever is most appropriate to how you entered the room.

009: You pry out the gems easily in 2 rounds, and nothing dreadful happens. You now possess two green jewels worth 50 gp each. Go back to encounter 2's Conclusion, page 80, and choose another option.

010: Strangely, magical emanations are not particularly strong here. Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and continue it.

011: The runes seem charged with energy. You can try to disarm them using Arcana (trained only) or Thievery, a process that takes at least three successful checks requiring a standard action each. The DC for each check is 15. If you fail three times or fail once by 5 or more, go to 097, page 95. If you give up the attempt, go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it. Success leads you to 028, page 89.

012: Voyvod says, "Talk is at an end. Now, you will submit yourself to us. Come, drink this, and sleep until I have use for you." Voyvod takes a cup from the table. If Splug is with you, go to 067, page 92. Otherwise, go to 105, page 96.

013: The creatures here are undead tainted by foul magic. Armed with your knowledge, you can deal 2 extra damage to them the first time you hit, or double that if you hit with a power that has the radiant keyword. If you spend a minor action to investigate further, go to 041, page 91. Otherwise, go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

014: You escape the frightful campsite and make it back to a nearby town. After a night in a warm inn bed, you awaken with your memory intact and the realization that you left your comrades to an unknown fate in the chasm. You can return to the chasm to rescue them by going back to encounter 1's Conclusion, page 78, and choosing another option, or you can end your adventure here. If Splug is with you, he can join you. If he was pulled into the chasm and you abandoned him, perhaps you'll be able to rescue him along with your lost companions.

015: It takes 1 minute (10 rounds) to look around the area and attempt a Perception check. You can take longer if you want—5 minutes allows you to take 10 on the check. On a check result of 15 or higher go to 126, page 97. Otherwise, go to 130, page 97.

016: Undead are normally immune to poison, but this poison has a hint of acid. It might actually harm Voyvod! Go back to 033, page 90.

017: The pool in the southwestern corner is definitely magical. You suspect it manipulates life force in a positive way. Return to encounter 3, page 88, and continue it.

018: Grabbing the root grants a +2 bonus to Fortitude against the *rushing stream* hazard. Go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it.

019: You find nothing of interest. Go back to encounter 4's Conclusion, page 83, and choose another option.

020: The mushroom actually tastes pretty good. The eater gains 10 temporary hit points (until expended or the end of your next short rest) but takes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends during combat, or this lasts until the end of your next short rest). Go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

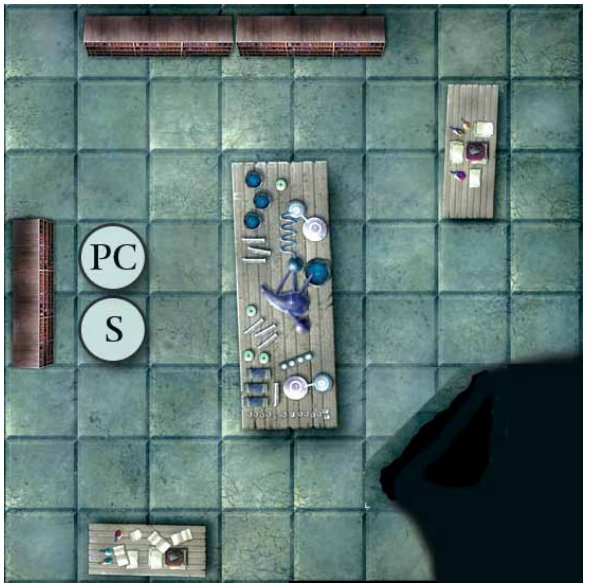
021: "Our magic has infused the creatures here. As we work, our creatures shall multiply. You shall be among them soon." Go back to 124, page 97, and continue.

022: Splug squeals like a terrified pig, and he disappears into the chasm. He splashes down, taking 1d10 damage, followed by disconcerting silence. At least the root that dragged him into the chasm apparently died from the fall. Go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

023: You sense that the magical emanations are stronger from the northern passage than any other part of the room. From the auras of the oozes, you can tell they have a magical origin, possibly alchemical. Go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it.

024: All tainted roots in this adventure die. If you go to an area that has tainted roots in it, those roots are dead and no longer a threat. Return to the conclusion of encounter 3, page 82.

025: You arrive at encounter 6, page 85, in the square shown here (PC); Splug arrives in the square marked (S). The monsters are aware of you.



026: If the hero's check result was 10 or higher, the hero goes to encounter 3, page 81. If the result was 9 or lower, go to 134, page 98.

027: These black roots are natural roots tainted by some foul magic, and they're mindless. They likely have a central control in some larger plantlike entity. Killing that creature is likely to render these roots harmless again. Go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

028: Runes flare, pushing the rocks and dust off of them. The seemingly solid wall ahead of you vanishes. Go to encounter 4, page 83. You start in the start area, and you have surprised the monsters there. Remaining bats from encounter 3 follow you, but if the tainted root pod still lives, it does not.

029: Voyvod hurls the potion on the floor and attacks you! Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and begin combat.

030: The hero regains 2 hit points. Each hero can regain a maximum of 14 hit points from the pool during this adventure. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

031: Athletics DC 10 to climb the root from the cavern floor. If climbing root D, go to 070, page 93. Otherwise, go to 117, page 96.

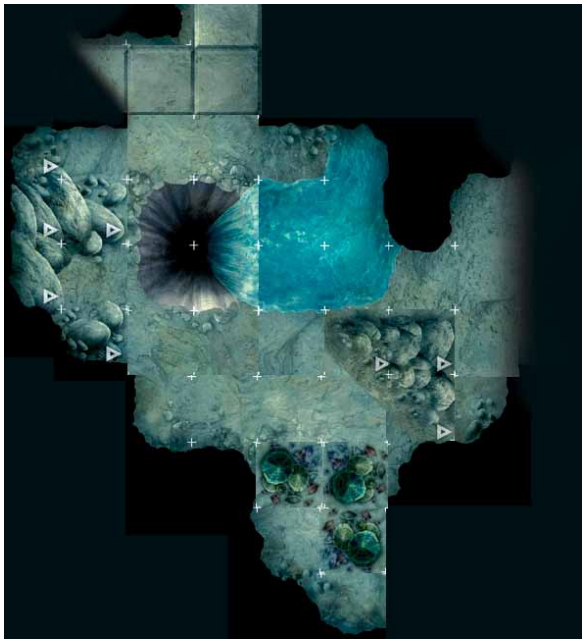
032: You find nothing of interest. Go back to encounter 3's Conclusion, page 82, and choose another option.

033: Having taken the drink, which is green and smells sweet and acidic, you can drink (go to 121, page 97), refuse to drink (go to 088, page 94), examine the drink (go to 044, page 91), pretend you intend to drink (go to 038, page 90), or attack (go back to encounter 6, page 85, and start combat). Note this entry for later so you can do more with the drink (standard action in combat). During the fight, you can throw the drink on (as a melee attack) or at (ranged attack; range 5 squares) a monster by going to 004, page 88.

034: The creature disintegrates into fine black dust, like that already collected in the circle. Go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

035: Splug says, "You da boss!" You get what you want out of him, although he seems a little sulky if you intimidated him. Go back to what you were doing.

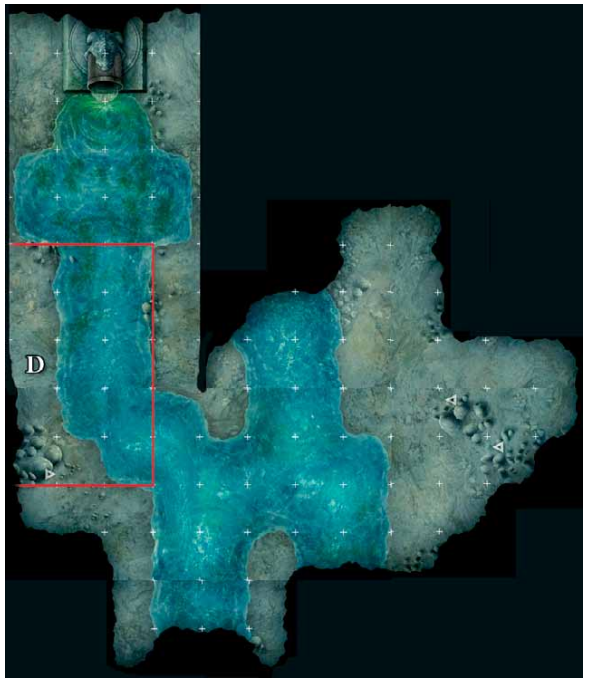
036: Light only illuminates what you see on the map below. If you move further into the darkness, go to 076, page 93. Otherwise, go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.



037: You can fasten the rope to a tree and then use it to climb down (Athletics DC 5 to climb). Doing so takes 3 rounds. Make note of the number of the square where you drop the rope into the chasm. If you fall while climbing, go to 058, page 92. Otherwise, go to 128, page 97.

038: Attempt a Bluff check (DC 10). If you succeed, go to 093, page 95. Otherwise go to 100, page 95.

039: To the north is a clearly artificial pipe, jutting from the wall and spewing water into this chamber. The pipe is carved to look as if a demonic frog is holding it, and the pipe itself looks big enough to enter. The frog's eyes sparkle in the ambient light, which is brighter in this passage. Where the pipe spews water, a deeper, calmer pool has formed on leveler ground. It's obvious that water within 3 squares of the pipe is difficult terrain but not a rushing stream hazard. Another swinging root dangles near the cave wall to the west. Mark your map with the information on this map, especially the second dangling root and its related outlined area, then go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it.



040: "Yes. You awakened and you could have escaped us. But you came to us instead. We must wonder why, but we will learn this in time without your telling us." Go back to 124, page 97, and continue.

041: Attempt a DC 16 check with the same skill, going to 074, page 93, if you succeed. Otherwise, go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

042: You reach the bottom of the chasm, which ends in the ceiling of a cavernous chamber, with a stream 10 feet below. You can climb back up (go to 069, page 93), or you can jump down (go to 098, page 95).

043: The frog's eyes are green jewels. If you pry them out, go to 009, page 88. If you leave them, go back to encounter 2's Conclusion, page 80, and choose another option.

044: You can attempt an Arcana or Nature check (DC 15). Success leads you to 107, page 96. Failure tells you nothing and sends you back to 033, page 90.

045: You see nothing unusual about the trap door. You can open it (minor action) and go to 006, page 88. Or you can go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue.

046: The water releases steam or smoke, and the monster looks as if it finds the experience uncomfortable but is otherwise unharmed. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

047: "No. You are particularly strong, for you managed to awaken and resist. Voyvod needs you most of all." Go to 012, page 88, and continue.

048: The ambient glow isn't natural; it's probably the unintentional side effect of magic use. Monsters here are tainted by the same magic—the oozes could even be semisentient from the magically or alchemically polluted water. The tainted roots likely have a central control in some larger plantlike entity. Killing that creature is likely to render these roots harmless again. Go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it.

049: The light is brighter deeper in the room. A table with papers and other objects on it sits a ways beyond the natural column to the west, and another similar table is visible to the north. You can return to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it. You can instead move farther to the west or the north. To do so stealthily, attempt a Stealth check for each hero, then go to 008, page 88. Otherwise go to 120, page 97.

050: It takes 1 minute (10 rounds) to look around the area and attempt a Perception check. On a check result of 10 or higher go to 110, page 96. Otherwise, go to 019, page 89.

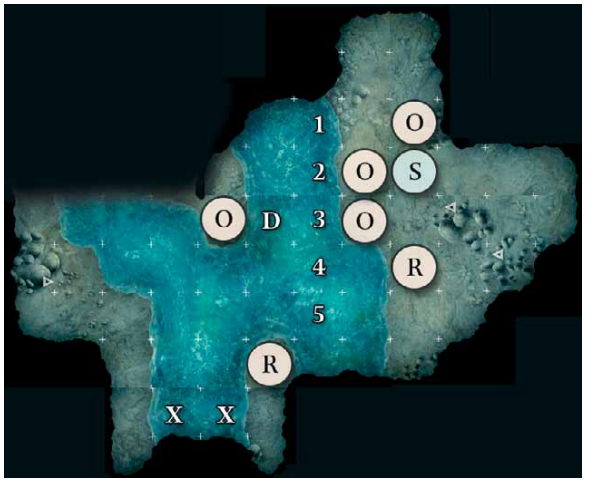
051: The room and the creatures within are clearly tainted by magic, and the plant here is likely the source of the animated roots you've encountered. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

052: When you arrive and look around, read:
You're in a large cave. Ambient green light allows you to see clearly. The chasm is above you now, an opening in the cave roof about 10 feet up. You're in a luminous green stream of water that flows from a hole in the northern cave wall, and the cave slopes upward toward that direction. The current is pretty strong. Part of the cave to the west is obviously hewn stone, and another stream flows from that passage. From your vantage, you can't see much of that tunnel.

Splug is squeaking in terror, fending off sickly-looking blue oozes. One of those black, mobile roots grasps for him. Movement in other parts of the cave indicates more creatures, including another root near the southern wall. The stream plunges into another cavern there, roiling fiercely.

Nearby, a long, inanimate root dangles in the water, looking like you could swing on it or hold onto it.

Use this map for your setup, and reduce Splug's (S) hit points by 6. Splug is in trouble! Go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it, skipping the normal reading for your arrival.



053: "This was our tomb, a place of rest until our long sleep ended. Now it is our home and place of work. We shall sleep no more." Go back to 124, page 97, and continue.

054: Darkvision doesn't penetrate this darkness. Go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

055: If you got a check result of 15 or higher, go to 011, page 88. If not, you learn little of value. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

056: Go to encounter 5, page 84. You arrive in the start area.

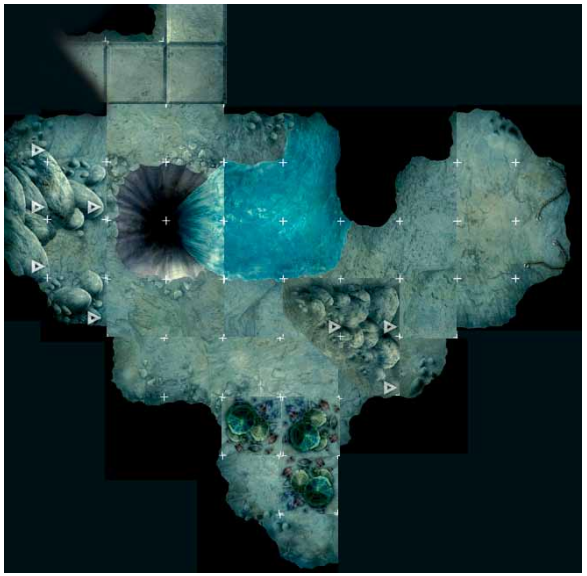
057: If your check result was 15 or higher, go to 087, page 94. Otherwise, go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

058: You plummet into the chasm, falling into water, taking 1d10 damage from the fall and landing prone. (If a tainted root is dragging you, it dies from the fall.) If the fall reduced you to 0 hit points, you quickly drown and your adventure is over. Otherwise, go to 080, page 94.

059: You have thwarted the wight's dark plans and rescued the wight's prisoners, your adventuring companions. They awaken shortly after the wight dies, and they reunite with you. Your memory returns quickly, and the ordeal has netted surviving heroes 500 experience points! In the lab, you recover your companions' gear, and you also find 350 gp worth of valuables! Congratulations! This ends the adventure.

060: If the object was made of metal, go to 028, page 89. Otherwise, go to 102, page 95.

061: Bright light falls on walls as below, along with four fallen humanoid figures chained to the walls. If you investigate these figures, go to 137, page 98. Otherwise, go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.



062: Splug simply won't do what you want, and seems a little hurt that you're pushing the issue. Really. Tears well up. You can attempt the check again with another skill. Or you can go back to what you were doing.

063: Make an Athletics check to jump. A hero that jumps 2 or more squares (DC 10) makes it to the root and can use it to climb down (Athletics DC 5 to climb). A fall while jumping or climbing leads to 058, page 92. Otherwise, go to 106, page 96.

064: Splug screams like a tiny youngster and goes under the water. If you are in an adjacent square, you have a chance to grab him before he goes completely under by using a standard action on your turn. If you try this, go to 101, page 95. Otherwise, go to 003, page 88.

065: The creature that entered the campfire square takes 1d4 fire damage. That creature takes another 1d4 fire damage each time it ends its turn in the fire. Being in the campfire square grants a +2 bonus to defenses against the tainted roots. Go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

066: You find nothing of interest. Go back to encounter 3's Conclusion, page 82, and choose another option.

067: Splug starts to sidle forward with a sigh, as if he's resigned to obeying Voyvod. Move him 1 square closer to Voyvod. If you accept the drink—not necessarily to drink it yet—move both heroes adjacent to Voyvod and go to 033, page 90. Refusal forces you to 029, page 90. You can attack by going back to encounter 6, page 85, and starting combat.

068: The ladder leads up 10 feet to a stone trap door. If a hero climbs the ladder (no check required) and attempts to inspect the trap door, go to 132, page 98. To open the trap door (minor action), go to 006, page 88. Otherwise, go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

069: Climbing the side of the chasm requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check. Make note of the number of the square where each hero enters the chasm. If you fall while climbing, go to 058, page 92. Otherwise, go to 042, page 91. Or go back to encounter 1's Conclusion, page 78, and make another choice.

070: The root leads back up to the campsite in encounter 1, in the square shown here. A fall while climbing deals 1d10 damage and lands the hero prone in the water in square "D." Getting back to the campsite requires a jump across the chasm (Athletics DC 10). If you go back to encounter 1, page 77, choose a conclusion option there. If all heroes leave encounter 2 this way, any monsters left in encounter 2 pursue by climbing the root. Or you can return to encounter 2, page 79, by climbing down again.

071: You sense nothing special, but you can retry the Perception check once as a minor action (go to 114, page 96). Otherwise, go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

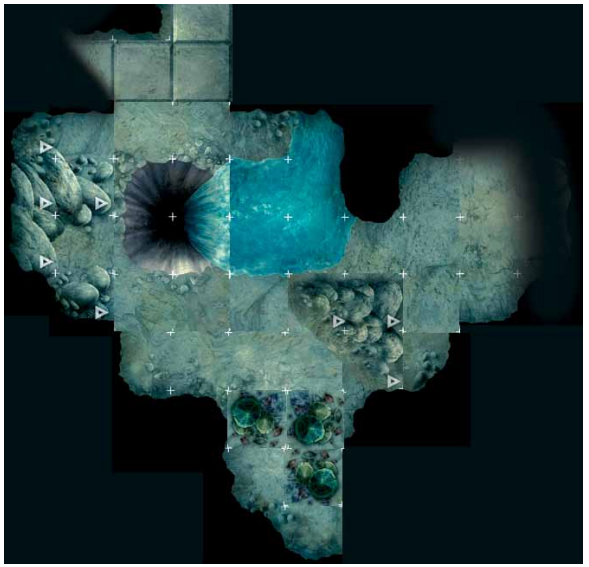
072: "We are Voyvod. We are eternal. Majestic. Great. Our nosism is appropriate. Through us, much shall be born. You are too small in mind and sight to understand us." Go to 012, page 88, and continue.

073: Athletics DC 10 to climb the rope from the cavern floor. A fall while climbing deals 1d10 damage and the hero lands prone. Climbing leads back to the numbered square you noted for the rope in encounter 1 (page 78, choose a conclusion option there; or return to encounter 2, page 79). If all heroes leave encounter 2 this way, any monsters left alive in encounter 2 pursue by climbing the rope.

074: The circle is a blood sigil. A creature standing in any square the circle touches can take 1d6 damage to treat a natural attack roll of 19 as a critical hit. A creature that dies in the circle will be turned to black dust. Go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

075: It takes 1 minute (10 rounds) to look around the area and attempt a Perception check. You can take longer if you want—5 minutes allows you to take 10 on the check. On a check result of 15 or higher go to 032, page 90. Otherwise, go to 066, page 92.

076: Bright light illuminates only what you see on the map below. If you move further into the darkness, go to 061, page 92. Otherwise, go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.



077: Attempt a DC 15 Athletics check. Success leads you to 118, page 97. Failure forces you to 025, page 89.

078: Make another Arcana check. If you get a 15 or higher, go to 017, page 89. Otherwise, you can learn nothing more. Return to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

079: "Yes. Our creatures are collectors who bring us subjects for our experiments. Subjects such as you and your companions and experiments with magic too great for you to grasp. Soon, Voyvod shall rule this area. We shall have an army and slaves, dead and living. You needn't worry yourself over it. You won't be there." Go back to 124, page 97, and continue.

080: Go to encounter 2, page 79. Each hero arrives in the start area, in a numbered square corresponding with the numbered square that hero came from in encounter 1.

081: Grabbing the tree provides the hero who grabbed it greater leverage, granting a +2 bonus to attempts to escape and a +2 bonus to Fortitude against the *drag* attack. Go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

082: The zombie shudders and lurches upright, standing in one grotesque motion. It regains 10 hit points, but it has only a standard action on this turn. It attacks or charges to attack if it can. Otherwise, it moves toward the closest hero. If the zombie drops to 0 hp again while in the sigil circle, you should go to 034, page 90. Now go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

083: You are pulled under the water and through a cavern. Attempt a DC 15 Athletics check to swim. Whether the check fails or not, go to encounter 3, page 81.

084: The wight is unusual in that it doesn't appear to be vulnerable to radiant damage. However, you sense a weakness and you deal 4 extra radiant damage on your next attack that deals radiant damage. Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and continue it.

085: If each hero got a Stealth check result of 11 or higher, the heroes receive a surprise round. Otherwise, combat begins normally. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

086: You're disoriented in churning water for a few moments, then you manage to stand just as Splug falls, squealing, into the chasm with you. He takes 1d10 damage from the fall, plus 2 damage for each square he was away from the chasm when you fell in, and he lands prone. Go to 080, page 94.

087: These mushrooms are barrow caps, spirit fortifying but mildly toxic to the body. Eating one of them grants the eater 10 temporary hit points (until expended or the end of your next short rest) but also imposes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends during combat, or this lasts until the end of your next short rest). If you eat one, go to 020, page 89. Otherwise, go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

088: Voyvod attacks you! Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and begin combat.

089: A hero can swing on the root as shown below. Once the task is done, go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it.

Swinging Root — **At-Will Terrain**

This root is long enough to allow you to swing across the cavern.

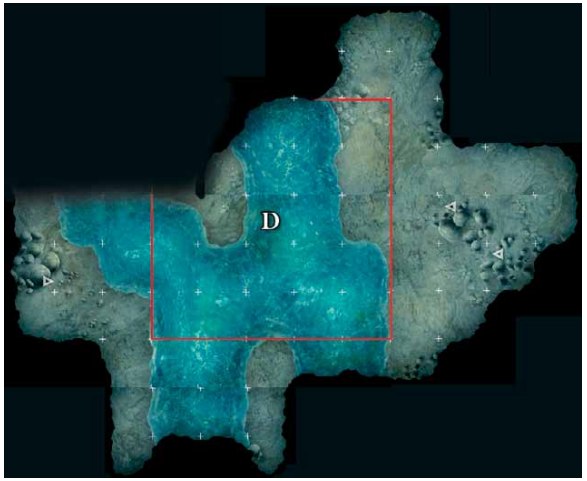
Move Action

Requirement: You must be in the root's square to use this power.

Check: Athletics check (DC 10) to swing from the root's square to one of the squares within the root's red-line–bounded area.

Success: You move in a straight line from the root's starting square to the ending square you selected, and you ignore difficult terrain for this movement. You can let go of the root at any point during this movement, and you can make a standing jump in any direction from that point. You provoke opportunity attacks only for leaving your initial square. If you reach an ending square, you can make a running jump. You must jump along the same straight line as the swinging root's path.

Failure: You do not move, and your move action ends.



90: The hero loses a healing surge. Each hero can lose only one healing surge in this way. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

091: The passage leads to a dead end, but a suspicious one. The wall in front of you is wooden and hinged on the right. You quickly spot a clasp and discern that this is a secret door, and you are standing on the undisguised side. If you open the door stealthily, go to 115, page 96. You can instead burst through the door forcefully by going to 077, page 93. Simply opening the door leads to 025, page 89.

092: Light doesn't seem to penetrate the darkness. Go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

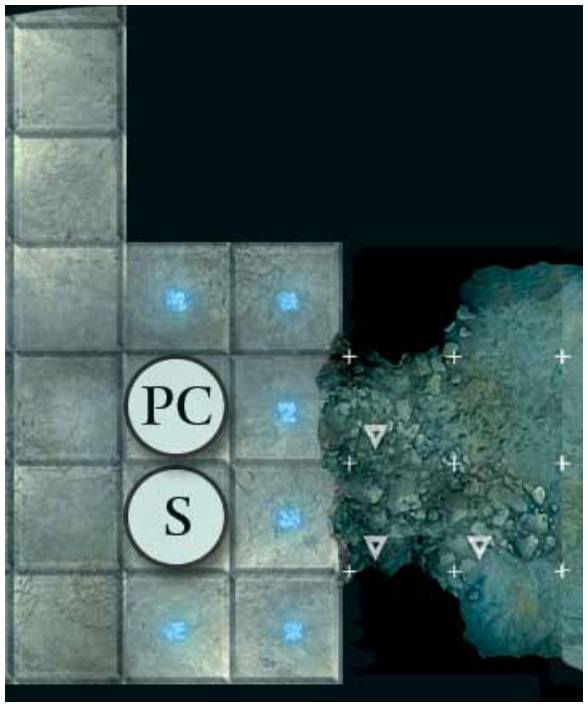
093: If you attack, you gain a surprise round. You also have a moment more with the drink, to examine it if you wish. Go back to 033, page 90, and continue.

094: Attempt an Athletics check or Acrobatics check to climb (DC 20)—the pipe is slippery, but the narrow space provides plenty of support for the strong or the dexterous. If you fall, you take 1d10 damage. You can quit at any time by going back to encounter 2, page 79, and choosing another option. If you succeed, go to 056, page 92.

095: "We are Voyvod, what such as you might call a wight. An undead creature, unburdened by a soul, immortal." Go back to 124, page 97, and continue.

096: You take 5 cold and necrotic damage, and you grope around in the silent, bewildering darkness. You can stay (go to 112, page 96) or you can light a light (go to 076, page 93). Otherwise, you can leave the darkness and go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

097: The heroes are suddenly blinded and feel a floating sensation for a second. The blindness ends as encounter 4 starts, and you notice the runes are illuminated, having moved the heroes and the rocks and dust on the worked stone. As shown on the map here, you start encounter 4 in the square marked PC; Splug, if present, starts in the square marked S. Remaining bats from encounter 3 follow you, but if the tainted root pod still lives, it does not. You are also subject to this attack. After resolving this attack, go to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.



Runes

Runes flare, your vision goes white, and your mind is filled with pain.

Attack: +5 vs. Will.
Hit: You are dazed until the end of your next turn.

098: You jump safely into the stream, landing on your feet. Go to encounter 2, page 79.

099: The monster's eyes flare red, and one can easily sense the circle is infusing violent intent with more power. A creature standing in a circle square can take 1d6 damage to treat a natural attack roll of 19 as a critical hit. The zombie does this whenever possible, but the wisps never do. Go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

100: Voyvod howls in rage and attacks you before you can learn more about the drink. Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and begin combat.

101: Make a Strength-based attack (d20 + Str modifier). If you hit, you grab Splug, and you can pull him into an unoccupied square adjacent to you. Then you can go back to encounter 2, page 79, and continue it. If you fail to grab Splug, go to 003, page 88.

102: Nothing happens. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

103: As it is grabbed, the tent falls down! The hero who grabbed it takes a –2 penalty to attempts to escape and a –2 penalty to Fortitude against the *drag* attack until the start of that hero's next turn. Go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

104: The circle causes the blood to burn and aggression to rise, and a creature standing in a circle square can take 1d6 damage to treat a natural attack roll of 19 as a critical hit. The zombie does this whenever possible, but the wisps never do. Go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

105: If you accept the drink—not necessarily to drink it yet—move adjacent to Voyvod and go to 033, page 90. Refusal forces you to 029, page 90. You can also simply attack by going back to encounter 6, page 85, and starting combat.

106: Go to encounter 2, page 79. You arrive in the start area, in the square marked "D" for the dangling root. If Splug follows you this way, he arrives in an unoccupied square adjacent to you in the start area.

107: The drink is an acidic poison of some sort, and you can be certain it's harmful. You can attempt a Religion check (DC 15) and go to 016, page 89, if you succeed. Otherwise, go to 033, page 90.

108: The pipe quickly turns upward, a dim circle of light revealing the pipe's other end high above. It looks slippery, but you can try to climb it (go to 094, page 95). Or you can go back to encounter 2's Conclusion, page 80, and choose another option.

109: "Your erstwhile companions sleep, unlike you, in the thickest darkness of the cavern until we wish to use them. They sleep until Voyvod no longer wishes it." Voyvod points to the southern exit from the room. Go back to 124, page 97, and continue.

110: A small vial remains among the dust on the sigil circle. It's a *gravespawn potion*. Go back to encounter 4's Conclusion, page 83, and choose another option.

Gravespawn Potion **Level 5**

This deep purple, putrescent liquid fends off diseases and poisons.

Potion 50 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Drink this potion and spend a healing surge. You do not regain hit points as normal. Instead, gain resist 5 necrotic and resist 5 poison until the end of the encounter. You also gain a +5 power bonus to your next Endurance check against any disease of level 5 or lower.

111: As your insult falls from your lips and takes root, Voyvod's look of amusement becomes a mask of rage. "They" attack! Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and begin combat.

112: Cold darkness envelops and disorients you, and you take 5 cold and necrotic damage. You bumble around in the darkness for a while. You can stay (go to 096, page 95) or you can light a light (go to 036, page 90). Otherwise, go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.

113: You quickly recover a rope (50 feet), a *healing potion*, your backpack, your bedroll, an extra bedroll, 1 sunrod, a metal pot, a metal pan, and a full waterskin. You can take any or all of this gear. Note what you take. This takes 6 rounds. Now, go back to encounter 1's Conclusion, page 78, and choose another option.

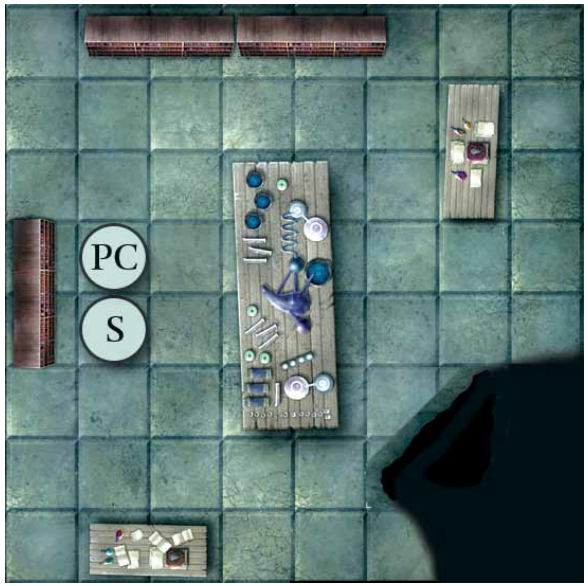
114: If you got a Perception check result of 15 or higher, go to 135, page 98. Otherwise, go to 071, page 93.

115: Attempt a DC 12 Stealth check. Success leads you to 118, page 97. Failure forces you to 025, page 89.

116: Attempt a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check (DC 12). You gain a +2 bonus to this check if Splug is better than you are at the task, such as when his skill is higher than yours. You take a –2 penalty to this check if you are better than Splug at the task, such as when your skill is higher. You also take a –2 penalty to this check if you're asking Splug to go somewhere alone, even for a moment. If you succeed, go to 035, page 90. Failure means a trip to 062, page 92.

117: The root leads to the cavern ceiling 10 feet up. A fall while climbing deals 1d10 damage and lands the hero prone in square D2. Nearby monsters pursue climbers up the root, as far as they are able, since the climber probably grants combat advantage while climbing the root.

118: You arrive at encounter 6, page 85, in the square shown here (PC); Splug arrives in the square marked (S). You have surprised the monsters there.



119: The object is unharmed but a curl of smoke or steam rises from the water with a hiss. If you threw the object in, it sinks. To recover it, you must enter the pool. Go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

120: Go to encounter 6, page 85. Choose the western start area or northern start area, whichever is most appropriate to how you entered the room.

121: You drink the potion, which tastes sweet and tangy, and Voyvod smiles. Your flesh quickly goes cold, your innards burn, and the world goes black. You never awaken again, and your adventure is over.

122: You sense residual magic in the area. The eerie glow and the monsters are likely a result of this magic. If you spend a minor action to investigate further, go to 023, page 89. Otherwise, go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

123: You can use a standard action to attempt an Arcana check (trained only) or Thievery check by going to 055, page 92. Otherwise, go back to encounter 3, page 81, and continue it.

124: As the wispy shapes begin to whimper and groan, the thin humanoid raises a hand and speaks to you in a hoarse whisper. "We are Voyvod. Welcome to our home. I see our creatures have brought you to us as we wished. You seem to be more resilient than your companions. You shall make an excellent subject for our experiments." You can attack by going back to encounter 6, page 85, and continuing it. You can instead speak to Voyvod, who seems willing to talk and amused at your presence. Here are some options:

- ✦ What are you? (Go to 095, page 95.)
- ✦ This is your home? (Go to 053, page 92.)
- ✦ Do I/we amuse you? (Go to 040, page 91.)
- ✦ What do you mean "your creatures"? (Go to 021, page 89.)
- ✦ You had me brought here? (Go to 079, page 94.)
- ✦ What about my companions? (Go to 109, page 96.)
- ✦ Can I/we leave? (Go to 047, page 91.)
- ✦ Why do you keep referring to yourself as "we"? (Go to 072, page 93.)
- ✦ Insult Voyvod. (go to 111, page 96)
- ✦ End the conversation by going to 012, page 88.
- ✦ Attack! Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and roll initiative.

125: Unlike you and Splug, monsters with darkvision can see in and through the darkness in here. Go back to encounter 6, page 85.

126: Other than the sparkling eyes of the frog pipe, which you might already know all about, you turn up nothing of interest. Go back to encounter 2's Conclusion, page 80, and choose another option.

127: Moving across the table smashes bottles and scatters paper. This enrages the wight but has little other effect. Go back to encounter 6, page 85, and continue.

128: Go to encounter 2, page 79. You arrive in the start area, in a numbered square corresponding with the numbered square you came from in encounter 1. If Splug follows you this way, he arrives in an unoccupied square adjacent to you in the start area.

129: The mushrooms provide no obstacle, and moving through them is harmless. Go back to encounter 5, page 84.

130: You find nothing of interest. Go back to encounter 2's Conclusion, page 80, and choose another option.

131: The chasm wall ends after about 10 feet, but it opens into a wider area lit by a green light. The light shimmers on running water about 20 feet below. On the far side of the chasm dangles a root that could allow easy climbing. You would need to jump about 10 feet to reach that root. Otherwise, the chasm sides look rough, and there's no reason to risk a jump to the chasm's other side other than to make use of the root there. If you jump into the chasm, go to 058, page 92. If you jump to the root, go to 063, page 92. If you climb down the near side, go to 069, page 93. If you have a rope, go to 037, page 90. You can also go back to encounter 1, page 77, and choose another option.

132: Attempt a DC 15 Perception check, and go to 045 if you succeed. Otherwise, you see nothing unusual about the trap door. You can open it (minor action) and go to 006, page 88. Or you can go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

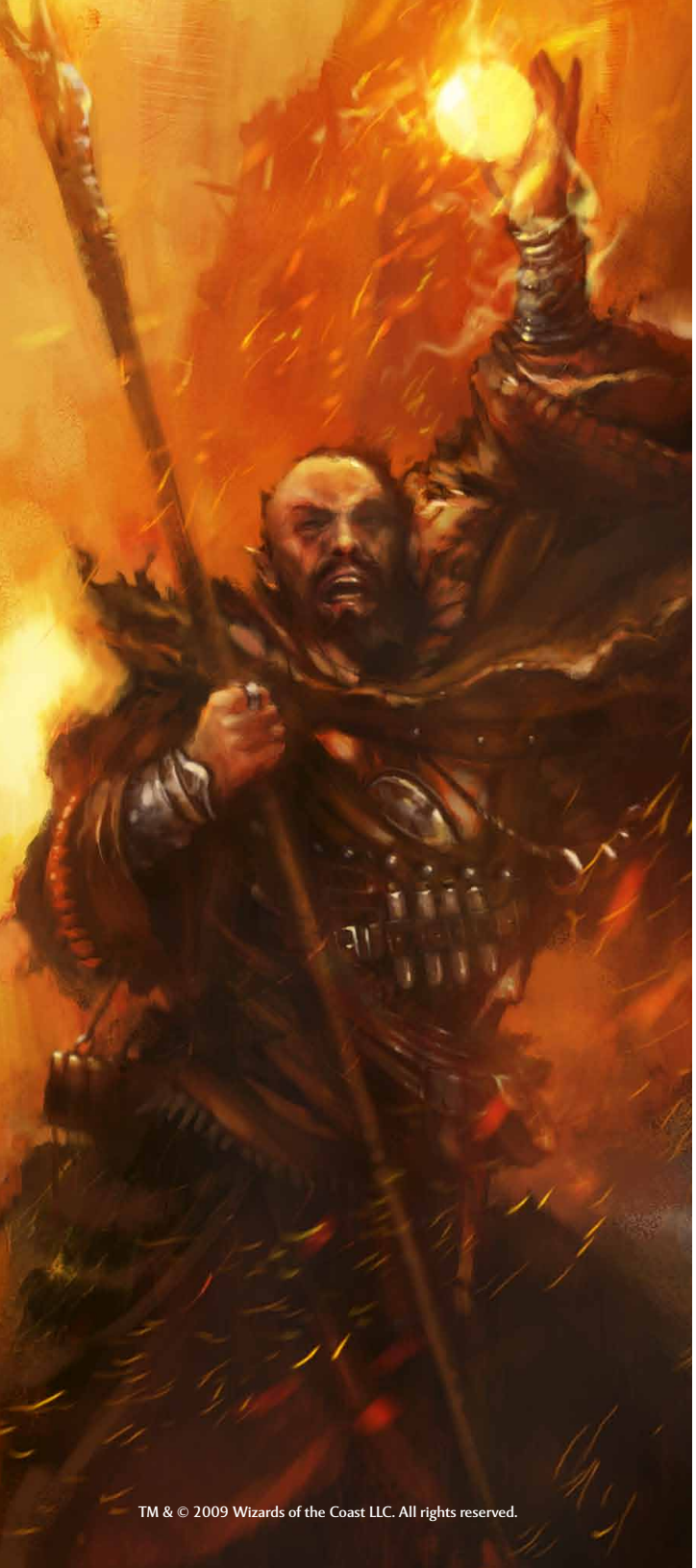
133: You sense residual magic in the area. The chasm and the creepy roots are likely a result of this magic. You remember the burning eyes in your dream, and you suspect you'll be facing someone or something that has necromantic powers. Go back to encounter 1, page 77, and continue it.

134: The hero takes 1d6 damage from the rough passage through the water. Now go to encounter 3, page 81. The hero is dazed until the end of his or her first turn.

135: You notice runes etched into the stones. Dust obscures them enough that you might not have seen them before. You needn't do so now, but make a note that you can examine the runes (go to 123, page 97), throw something on the runes (go to 060, page 92), or touch the runes (go to 097, page 95).

136: Magic is strong here, especially in the circle of sigils. If you spend a minor action to investigate further, go to 041, page 91. Otherwise, go back to encounter 4, page 83, and continue it.

137: These people are clearly alive but in some sort of magical stupor. They wear only tattered mundane clothing. You suddenly realize that these people are your traveling companions! Perhaps you can find something to rouse them, but nothing here does the trick. You need to leave the area if you hope to find such an item. Go back to encounter 5, page 84, and continue it.



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Know Your Role: Controller

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustrations by Evan Shipard

Many adventuring groups make the mistake of thinking the controller is a secondary choice when compared to what an extra leader or striker can bring to the group. Although no role is mandatory for adventuring parties, setting aside a controller can turn a standard encounter into a hard one and make a hard fight into an impossible one. Resistance to controllers frequently stems from misapprehensions about what the role is supposed to do. This article peels back the curtain to examine the role's guts while also offering new feats and powers that are available to any controller regardless of class.

Controller Basics

As of this writing, five classes make up the controller role: the wizard in the *Player's Handbook*, the druid and invoker in the *Player's Handbook 2*®, and the psion and seeker from the forthcoming *Player's Handbook 3*. Each class approaches the controller role in a different way, but what these classes bring to a combat encounter follow the role's basic tactics.

According to the *Player's Handbook*, controllers control and use area offense. The terms are more or less true, but they rely on class powers to demonstrate what the techniques mean. This description can create some confusion since controllers aren't the only classes to use area offense—look at the rogue's *blinding barrage* exploit or the ranger's *unstoppable arrows*. Furthermore, control might represent actual control over enemies, restricting enemy options, or manipulating the battlefield terrain to serve in a useful capacity.

To clarify the *Player's Handbook*, a controller participates in a combat encounter by creating circumstances that discourage enemies from making certain choices. A controller goes about limiting choices by making area offense attacks, by which the controller punishes enemies from grouping together or takes a direct hand in influencing actions through zones, conjurations, summons, and a variety of other techniques.

Area Offense

A controller's technique is clearest when he or she uses a power to attack several foes at once. All controllers have at least a few powers designed to strike multiple opponents and such powers can take the form of multitarget ranged attacks, area burst attacks, or close bursts and blasts. The first lesson controller players learn is that area offense powers are best used to clear out minion groups so that defenders and strikers don't have to waste actions removing them one at a time.

Although controllers can find something satisfying about catching half a dozen minions in a *scorching*

burst and wiping the lot of them from the battlefield in one go, anyone who has taken a controller class out for a spin knows such occasions are few and far between. Enemies rarely stay bunched up for long, and area attacks against individual opponents deal less damage and also expose allies to friendly fire. As well, implement-users can lag behind other characters in accuracy, which can be frustrating when every attack against six or so enemies misses.

Control

Control powers take many forms. A particular class's story elements, power source, and secondary roles all influence the powers available to these characters. A wizard might create a *freezing cloud*, and a druid can call forth writhing vines by using *vine serpents* to immobilize or restrain foes. Zones might deal damage to creatures that enter or start their turns inside them. Powers might punish foes for making attacks, moving, or performing another kind of action. Other powers might call forth new opponents so that enemies must divide their attention between characters and the creatures they summon. In every case, a controller's powers encourage certain options while punishing others.

Control powers are central to a controller's function on the battlefield, but the more influence a power has on an enemy, the less damage it deals in many cases. For this reason, control powers are best used when allies can pick up the slack and dish out the damage.

Taking Control

When picking and using powers in combat, you should keep several factors in mind.

Diversity: When looking at your controller class's power list, you find ranged powers, area burst powers, and close attack powers, as well as pure damage and pure control powers. Avoid over-specializing. A good mix allows you to contribute more effectively in combat. For your at-will powers, be sure to pick one area power and one ranged (or melee) power. Encounter and daily powers should reflect these choices so that you can have a tool for every problem.

Timing: Enemies don't stay bunched up for long, so attack the group whenever you can. Your best opportunities for mass damage fall in the opening round or two. After this point, enemies scatter, are pinned down by defenders, or bear down on you for a bit of vengeance. These three possibilities point out why targeted attacks are so important: They deal more damage than burst/blast attacks so that you can pick off the enemies that survived your initial strike at your leisure.

Timing on strong control powers is less clear and more situational. As a rule of thumb, control powers should be reactionary in that you use them to cancel exploitative tactics or remove dangerous adversaries from the fight. Using an augmented *dishearten* right out of the gate before you have had a chance to assess your foes is both reckless and counterproductive. Sure you deal damage, but the penalty the power provides doesn't do much good when the elite brute reveals itself on the initiative count following yours.

Concentrating Fire: Most groups recognize that concentrating attacks against one opponent at a time is a good way to eliminate enemies in short order. As a controller, your damage output isn't high enough to contribute in a significant way, so unless you have no other options, you should use your powers to help your allies take out their foes. You can achieve this type of support by sequestering enemies through zones and walls, blasting supporting opponents such as minions, or controlling other enemies until the party can tackle them.

Collateral Damage: Some controllers have "ally-blind" powers, which means the attacks target all creatures. By the second round's end, most defenders and melee strikers ought to be engaging the enemy, so if you plan to use an area or close attack, you are probably going to hit one or more friends in the process. Sometimes, especially when minions swarm a defender, the damage you can deal to your buddy is worth it if you clear out a pile of mooks. As a rule of thumb, you should include your allies in bursts or blasts only if you can also hit a number of enemies equal to the allies at risk + 2. So if the ranger and the fighter are hacking through four goblin warriors, it's probably okay to use *grasping shards*.

Know Your Enemy: Monster knowledge checks don't require training and they don't take an action. If you don't know what you're fighting, you had better make the check as soon as your turn comes around. Learning an enemy's powers can tell you a lot about its role, and knowing its role can also tell you what defenses you should be targeting. Heavy-hitting melee types frequently have high AC and Fortitude. Reflex is usually high for fast-moving enemies and lurking types, and controllers and area attack opponents can benefit from high Will.

Persistent Effects: The best area offense powers are the ones that do more than deal damage. *Shock sphere*, for example, is a perfectly fine spell and can catch up to 25 creatures in one shot. But how often

are you going to face 25 enemies at once? Also, how likely is it that all those bad guys are going to line up for you? *Icy rays*, however, can target one or two creatures, and it keeps them in place, which makes *icy rays* a handy spell for pinning down tough brutes while your allies dispatch the softer opponents first.

Controller Feats

The following feats allow controllers to customize their powers to respond to challenges encountered on the battlefield. Most of the feats require you to sacrifice a chosen power. These feats are useful to all controllers, regardless of power source or class.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Clever Control

Prerequisite: Controller role

Benefit: Whenever you target two or more creatures with a close or area attack power and you hit only one of those creatures, the attack deals 1d6 extra damage. The extra damage increases to 2d6 at 11th level and 3d6 at 21st level.

Destructive Power

Prerequisite: 8th level, controller role

Benefit: You can exchange any 6th-level or higher utility power you know for *destructive power*.

Destructive Power — Feat Power

By funneling greater power into your attack, you ensure its effect is not wasted.

Daily
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You roll a 1 on any damage die when you hit with an area or close attack power
Effect: You reroll any result of 1 or 2 on a damage die until the die roll is something other than 1 or 2.

Explosive Power

Prerequisite: 8th level, controller role

Benefit: You can exchange any 6th-level or higher utility power you know for *explosive power*.

Explosive Power — Feat Power

Your attack explodes outward in a silent wave of energy, pushing creatures away from your attack's point of origin.

Daily
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You hit at least one creature with an area or close attack power
Effect: You push each creature in the burst or blast of the triggering attack power 5 squares away from the attack's origin square. This forced move ends when a creature is no longer within the triggering attack's blast or burst.

Forceful Power

Prerequisite: 8th level, controller role

Benefit: You can exchange any 6th-level or higher utility power you know for *forceful power*.

Forceful Power — Feat Power

You knock those struck by your attack from their feet.

Daily
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You hit at least one creature with an area attack power
Effect: You knock prone each creature you hit with the triggering power.

Penetrating Power

Prerequisite: 10th level, controller role

Benefit: You can exchange any 10th-level or higher utility power you know for *penetrating power*.

Penetrating Power — Feat Power

You contain the attack's energy in a magical shell so that you can punch through your enemy's resistances.

Encounter
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: The next ranged, area, or close attack you use before the end of your next turn ignores all resistances, including insubstantial.

Seeking Power

Prerequisite: 8th level, controller role

Benefit: You can exchange any 6th-level or higher utility power you know for *seeking power*.

Seeking Power — Feat Power

Infusing your attack with greater power reduces the risk that intervening obstructions can foil your attack.

Encounter
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: The next ranged attack roll you make before the end of your next turn ignores all concealment and cover.
Special: If the attack misses, you regain the use of this power.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power™ 2*, *Draconomicon™ 2*, and *Primal Power™*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Guilds & Groups: Moon Catchers

By Bruce R. Cordell
Illustrations by Evan Shipard

Another moon once graced the sky. It shone blue and cool—a coin-sized gem sailing the night. Called Iltani the Blue, the moon had the reputation of being a good omen when it was viewed waxing full, especially by travelers and explorers. Old songs and sayings sometimes touch on Iltani, though few recognize the allusion as referring to something that once was real. For most, "once in a blue moon" is a figure of speech, meaning something that rarely or never occurs. However, Iltani the Blue was real, and its absence is keenly felt by those who know the truth.

History

Most people don't remember Iltani, because the moon disappeared about a hundred years ago. Before that, Iltani enjoyed a career only thirty years long before its destruction.

Iltani rose in the east around one hundred and thirty years ago for the first time. Its appearance sparked consternation because no one had foreseen the arrival of a completely new moon—not the wizards in their towers, the priests in their temples, the warlocks on their crags dedicated to the stars, or the sorcerers for whom the natural flow of the seasons is an inherent, cosmic inevitability.

In time, incipient panic died away as the moon's appearance failed to precede any sort of catastrophe. Dire pronouncements were made, but not by anyone who turned out to have any knowledge or connection with the new blue moon. In time, most people accepted the unanticipated blue orb sailing the sky as another feature of the heavens—one that was novel and mysterious, but apparently not an omen of imminent disaster.

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Some did not take the moon for granted, though they were fascinated by the moon's appearance and dedicated themselves to learning the truth. One of these people was Tetherya Acrid. Tetherya, a tiefling sorceress already fascinated by celestial objects, believed the appearance of the blue moon must presage something amazing, even if what that might be wasn't immediately obvious.

Tetherya spent years putting together an expedition to Iltani. The preparations should have measured mere months for someone as accomplished as the sorceress, but ill luck dogged every decision that touched on the blue moon. However, the tiefling's native talent and perseverance eventually paid off. Tetherya finally walked upon the new moon.

She found the entire moon was a 500-mile diameter chunk of a beryl-like mineral. Airless and dead, the sorceress discovered nothing on the light side that faced the world. On the dark side, Tetherya found massive runes inscribed as deep fissures in Primordial. The runes seemed to be a warning. According to the tiefling, the message read:

You are barred from this world, apocalypse. You will have no landing here, Nebiru. Iltani the Blue is set in the sky against you, Falling Star. While Iltani guards the heavens, your red scar shall not be scratched across the night. This world rejects you, Nebiru, in the name of Iltani the Blue.

Tetherya found nothing else on the moon except for the warning. She returned to the world and researched the name Nebiru the Falling Star. What she found chilled her heart.

Nebiru was nothing less than an entity described as an apocalypse dragon. An apocalypse dragon is a catastrophic dragon that has lived too long and grown too powerful. According to the lore she unearthed, Nebiru resides in a vault of empty space beyond the world, in a lair of lightless hollows composed of half-formed worlds and the rubble of creation. The hollows beneath Nebiru's airless surface are filled with the detritus of failed empires, dead kings, and broken dreams pilfered from the world. One day, Nebiru will nudge the trajectory of her moon-sized lair just so. When that happens, its path brings it into conjunction with the world. Then, the skies will flame red as her lair impacts the land with all the energy of a falling star.

This fate would take place but for one fact: Iltani the Blue served as a ward against that very possibility. As long as Iltani showed its blue face over the world, the world would be safe from that particular ending.

Thus, on the day that Iltani the Blue detonated and shattered into a million tiny fragments that rained down across the world, Tetherya knew the world's eventual end was assured.

Unless she could do something about it.

Moon Catchers Organization

Goal: Gather as many shards of destroyed Iltani the Blue as possible. Eventually, they intend to reassemble those shards and place the moon again in its guardian position high above the world.

Size: Tiny but far flung, spread out around the world in towns and uncivilized regions.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Philosophy: "Though the world doesn't know or care, one day our efforts to gather together Iltani will save it and everything living on and under it."

History: Tetherya Acrid founded the Moon Catchers approximately 100 years ago. Before handing off the reins to individual cells, she made a prediction: "One day, the blue moon will return."

Leadership: Individual cells manage themselves, but all cell leaders listen to the pronouncements of the Lord Astronomer, who oversees the disposition of collected shards of Iltani brought to the Azure Observatory. Heads of cells are called Observers.

Headquarters: Individual cells might not have headquarters, but the "motherhouse" for the organi-

Options to a Blue Moon

In some campaign settings, the number of moons is significant. Suggesting the presence of another celestial interloper, even one that came and went in prehistory, may not fly (so to speak). If this is true in your game, you can still use the material in this article if you give it a slight spin. Options to a moon include:

Iltani was never a moon, but a comet that appeared in the heavens every seven years; 100 years ago, it didn't pass the world, but impacted it and shattered into the shards described.

Iltani was a great crystal observatory constructed on the highest peak in the world by enigmatic beings; 100 years ago, it was destroyed in a local cataclysm that shattered it into the shards described.

Iltani was a massive beryl statue of a woman holding aloft the vault of the heavens as represented by a starry globe; 100 years ago, purple-clad assassins rushed into the structure containing the statue. They detonated it with foul magic and stole away all the resultant shards.

zation is called the Azure Observatory. The interior of the Azure Observatory is many times larger than the exterior, and it contains a space (it is said) large enough to reassemble the entire moon.

Membership Requirements: Those who promise to bring or who deliver a shard of Iltani (a blue beryl-like stone) to the Azure Observatory can become members. Membership duties for heroic tier characters are loose; it doesn't require too much dedication to the effort, as long as occasional shards are delivered. Higher-tier characters can take on additional responsibilities within the organization if they wish.

Activities: General members collect shards and fragments and send them to the Azure Observatory. Other members explore the world for larger deposits of the destroyed moon. Higher-level members are told of the threat of Nebiru (or they receive a *sliver of knowledge*), and they can take steps to lessen that threat in other ways.

Once a year the Moon Catchers enjoy the Festival of the Blue Moon, where they anticipate Iltani's return to the sky with a wild festival that features blue wine and magical illusions of the moon's return. The celebration lasts from dawn until dusk

Enemies: Nebiru is an enemy, as are various crazed star and dragon cults that secretly revere Nebiru and work toward her eventual appearance.

One of the "crazed star" cults is called the Red Watchers. The Red Watchers also collect scattered shards of the broken moon Iltani, but they do so to destroy them, or perhaps, use them to hasten the arrival of Nebiru.

Minor Quest: While exploring the nearby dungeon or lair, the organization ask adventurers to keep an eye out for a cache of Iltani shards—the resident of the dungeon or lair is noted for having an eye for such gems and a penchant for collecting them.

Major Quest: Madarsen Kar is a local lord and a well-known art collector, especially of sculpture. Madarsen has a particular love for gemstone sculptures and has made a special effort to collect a particular grade of beryl that he provides to sculptors. The organization asks the characters to find out where Madarsen is acquiring his raw Iltani shards, and to take the large pieces the lord has already had converted into sculptures.

What no one initially knows is that Madarsen is fully aware of the significance of the beryl he collects, but is using it in rituals designed to hasten the eventual appearance of Nebiru; Madarsen is a major principle in one of the crazed star cults, the Red Watchers, that believes the end of the world will set up a new regime with himself in charge.

Moon Catcher Magic Items

Magic items created with tiny pieces of Iltani are allowed by the organization, though it is understood that such items might have to be returned to the Azure Observatory one day to finish rebuilding the blue moon. Some believe that consumables are an insignificant amount of Iltani, so they don't worry about them.

Consumables

Shard of Freedom Level 15

You can win free of falling boulders or another effect that otherwise might pin and bury you.

Lvl 15 1,000 gp
Other Consumable
Power (Consumable): Minor Action. The next time an effect immobilizes you before the end of the encounter, the effect does not immobilize you.
Special: Using this item counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

Shard of Clear Sight Level 17

Even through choking clouds of dust, you can cast off blindness.

Lvl 17 2,600 gp
Other Consumable
Power (Consumable): Minor Action. The next time an effect blinds you before the end of the encounter, the effect does not blind you.
Special: Using this item counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

Sliver of Knowledge Level 4

You discover the history of Iltani the Blue, Nebiru, and the Moon Chasers.

Lvl 4 40 gp
Other Consumable
Power (Consumable): Minor Action. You expend this item when you place the gem to your eye and look through it. You learn all the information described in this article regarding the Moon Chaser history, the Moon Chaser organization, and Moon Chaser magic items.

Sliver of Salvation — Level 7+

You throw off the lingering effects of enemy spells and ill effects with greater ease.

Lvl 7 100 gp Lvl 27 65,000 gp
Lvl 17 2,600 gp
Other Consumable
Power (Consumable): Minor Action. You gain a +2 power bonus to the next saving throw you make before the end of the encounter.
Level 17: +4 power bonus to the saving throw.
Level 27: +6 power bonus to the saving throw.
Special: Using this item counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

Sliver of Stability — Level 13

Even when the ground shakes and shudders, you know how to stay on your feet.

Lvl 13 650 gp
Other Consumable
Power (Consumable): Minor Action. The next time you fall prone before the end of the encounter, you can stay standing instead.
Special: Using this item counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

Other Magic Items

Beryl of Catastrophe Avoidance — Level 2+

This blue gem hovers near your head, improving your ability to speak reasonably.

Lvl 2 520 gp Lvl 12 13,000 gp
Item Slot: Head
Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy and Insight checks. You gain a +3 bonus to Diplomacy and Insight checks against catastrophic dragons.
Level 12: +3 item bonus, +5 bonus against catastrophic dragons.

Deep Impact Weapon — Level 14+

Your attack drives your foe into the ground with the force of a falling star.

Lvl 14 +3 21,000 gp Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp
Weapon: Any melee
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 thunder damage per plus
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with a melee basic attack using this weapon. *Effect:* The target falls prone and is restrained (save ends).

About the Author
Bruce Cordell is a D&D® designer, but during his thirteen years in the game industry, he has dabbled in miniatures, board games, collectible card games, d20 games, and more.

HOUSE RULES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE
illustrations by William O'Conner

When we were kids, my brother and I used to play *Monopoly* by our own rules. Or rather, *his* rules.

He could borrow money from me without penalty or interest and use it to build hotels on properties I would later land on. If I managed to build one house, it was always on Baltic Avenue (the only property I could afford), but my dear brother would always repossess it when I couldn't afford the nightly rate in his hotel (that I helped build!) on Marvin Gardens.

My only rule was to pitch a fit, throw the board off the table, and shower the repo man in little red hotels, top hats, and silver shoes. That and step on one of his dreaded red hotels as I was stomping out of the room, which made me cry all the harder. It is considered a "rule" if it happens every time, right?

Dungeons & Dragons has long been perceived as a game that involves a labyrinth of rules. I can only imagine what madness my brother would have made out of it had he played. These so-called "complex rules" are often the reason people shy away from learning how to play D&D. Certainly, when you're trying to explain the game to a new player, you've probably seen the glazed-over expression similar to the one my 7th grade Algebra teacher, Mr. Thames, saw on my face.

It's odd, then, that so many people actually have the gall to add *more* rules to their games. You know the old expression: Everyone's a game designer! And it appears to be true, judging from the people I've talked to about their home games. Granted, most of them really *are* game designers, since my focus group testing almost always takes place by the microwave in the third floor kitchen. You'd be amazed by how much microwave popcorn R&D consumes.

Today's focus group consisted of Peter Schaeffer, RPG Developer; Mike Mearls, D&D Lead Designer; Andy Collins, Manager of RPG Development and Editing; Jefferson Dunlap, Prepress Manager; Greg Bilsland, RPG Editor; and "Kay," who won't let me use her real name or title because she's embarrassed about some of her group's house rules. Why, I'll never know, because I'm incorporating the rule I'm revealing below into my game immediately.

Before I started to collect house rules, I wanted to discover why people felt the need to add rules to their games.

Kay explained it this way: "House rules are modifications that come into use because players feel they make the game easier or more fun."

"They're not so much about adding rules, as much as about enhancing rules," Peter said. "Or even sometimes subtracting one rule to add a house rule."

"And you're okay with that?" I asked him.

"Of course!" he said. "D&D is meant to be customized! It's all about being creative and imaginative."

Again with this "customizing" and "creating" and "imagining"! I know I've had that conversation before with various members of R&D, and still, it eludes me. They spend all that time writing books full of rules only to send them out there for people to add, subtract, and enhance. They're not just okay with it, they encourage it! I'll drop into a full-blown tizzy if someone so much as adds salt to a casserole I labored over. *Salt?! The damn thing is perfect!* I guess that's another reason I'm not a game designer.

But I get the desire to make up rules or even new games. Heck, we did this in college every Monday while watching *Melrose Place*. Drink every time Billy looks dumbfounded. Do a shot for every scene where Jake is wearing chaps but is nowhere near his motorcycle. Shotgun a beer every time Kimberly's maniacal face is shot in extreme close-up. (By the way, the ad agency where Amanda Woodward worked was named D&D. Maybe Aaron Spelling was a closet gamer.)

Since so many people will be returning home this holiday season, many to game groups they haven't seen in a while, I've decided to celebrate by going home as well—home brewed, that is. (And home for real—don't panic, Mom.)

The Wyld Stallyns play it pretty much by the book. Maybe it's because we're sometimes playtesting and that's our job, or maybe it's because New DM doesn't want us to have any fun. I was inclined to think it was the latter until he gently reminded me of a house rule I play every Tuesday—Mr. Oso de la Fez.

You might remember that Oso began his quest for familiar fame as a wee mini in my dice bag. Today he's a real live familiar you can find in the Character Builder. Neat, huh? I wondered how many other house rules became actual rules, so I put the question to R&D.

"Dungeon Masters are instinctive game designers," Andy answered. "They're always looking to tweak the system to better fit their group's needs."

Andy went on to say that he didn't know for sure, but he's willing to wager that a significant percentage of "real" D&D rules started off as house rules.

"I'd bet the first person to decide that characters needed the negative-hit-point buffer was a Dungeon Master tired of TPKs."

A Dungeon Master sick of TPKs? Right! Like that ever happens.

One might think that if it's your job to design and develop the rules for D&D, playing with house rules would be less like *playing* and more like playtesting. Kind of how they say if you work at an ice cream parlor, you get sick of ice cream—which is complete bunk because I worked at a pizza place in college and ate pizza every day for 329 days.

Anyway, because of this, many of the developers and designers in R&D don't use house rules often.

"If a house rule worked really well, wouldn't you be tempted to add it to the game?" I asked.

"Strangely, the ability to write the actual rules means that your 'house rules' become 'official rules' much more quickly," Andy explained.

The same was true for Mike.

"It feels like cheating to bend the rules to fit my game, and it's important that I have a good sense of how the game works as written."

But that's not to say the R&D folks don't use *any* house rules. And if you want to add some new rules to your home game, why not playtest a few of R&D's? Who knows? They might end up in a book someday, and you can say you saw them here first.

Oh Come All Ye XP

The more I talked to Greg about his home game, the more I believed he missed his calling. I'm sure he's perfectly happy editing and writing, and darn good at it too, but I could see him thriving as a kindergarten teacher. In fact, I'm so convinced of this, I'm having a hard time not calling him Mr. Bilsland. He's all about helping his players get to the next level. Like *every session*. Regardless of combat encounters or skill challenges. New DM really makes us work for that XP, and Mr. Bilsland just dishes them out willy nilly. How cool is that?

Retraining Around the Christmas Tree

Apparently R&D wouldn't have had an issue with Bart changing classes in the middle of a campaign—even though he was hired to play a cleric! Okay, okay, only because it's Christmas will I let that one go. *For now.*

If you were struggling with your character's life choices and Andy was your DM, fear not. He would let you swap out elements of your character, such as old feats with new ones or ranged attacks for melee attacks between levels. Even sooner if you're really laboring. Instant build gratification!

"Just as long as they don't do it in the middle of the dungeon," he said.

Mr. Bilsland is the same way. *Of course*. It's all about nurturing and growing and self-confidence with this guy.

"Players can re-spec their characters as much as they want," he explained. "They don't have to follow the retraining rules. They can change any powers or feats they want between sessions."

They probably get a cookie and a nap too.

Magic of the Season

Have you ever gone shopping with a friend, and you both spy the same Marc Jacobs quilted nylon bomber jacket at the same time? On sale. And it's the only one left in the store, probably in existence. And lucky you, it's your size! But so is your friend.

No? *Really?* Allow me to enlighten you then. It will go something like this: You sneak sideways looks at one another and pick up your pace, each trying to get to the rack first, but without making it obvious that you're in a race. You try to distract your friend by carrying on an inane conversation about the merits of owning a car with all-wheel drive versus simply going with all-weather tires up front on your front-wheel drive, and demand that she give you her opinion on the matter. *What do you think the best option is? Tell me!* But it's no use. You both want that coat and only one of you will emerge victorious. This, my friends, is why I view shopping as a solo sport (and why I have so many winter coats).

Even if you haven't found yourself in a similar showdown at a department store, you may have in a dungeon when your DM announces the party unearthed a 9th-level magic item. Oh boy! But who gets it?

In our game, we use an equation handed down to New DM from many games ago. Every party member adds up the levels for every magic item and weapon they own. He or she with the lowest total number gets the new toy.

Simple math and voila! Time to go shopping. Alone.

If Mike were our DM, then some of those magic items we unearthed might be custom magic items, like a crown, a sword, a book, or even a suit of elven chainmail—all of which will play an important role in our campaign.

"It lets me give out goodies that the players can't find in any book."

And by "customizing" he means *customizing*. Like he's not just handing you a sword, he's giving you a rich physical description, backstory, history, and properties. You're not just scoring a one-of-a-kind designer gown at a sample sale, you're getting one custom designed just for you by Valentino.

Deck the Halls (and by "Halls" I Mean "Bad Guys")

For some, it's just not enough to know that you hit the monster. You have to know *where* you hit the monster. If that's you, you're not alone. Co-worker Kay has disclosed one of my favorite house rules.

In her game, when someone hits their target, they will roll a d12 to see *where* they hit. This matters because certain locations do more damage. The breakout is as follows:

1. Forehead (normal damage)
2. Back of the head (normal damage)
3. Neck (double damage)
4. Left shoulder (normal damage)
5. Right shoulder (normal damage)
6. Heart (double damage)
7. Gut (double damage)
8. Groin (triple damage)
9. Upper leg left (normal damage)
10. Upper leg right (normal damage)
11. Lower leg left (normal damage)
12. Lower leg right (normal damage)

Even if no one will use this in my game, I'm going to secretly play it at the table. And in my car when someone cuts me off. And in the movie theater when there's a loud talker. And, well, pretty much anywhere I'm pissed off and within reach of a d12. Thanks, Kay!

Custom Spec

This weapon was created by Mike for a character in his campaign played by James Wyatt.

The Iron Sword of Elemental Power

This strange weapon is crafted from a single piece of iron ore. From what you can tell, it was carved into shape rather than crafted at a forge. You know a few bits of information about the weapon, based on your (and your companions') knowledge of history.

The sword is a weapon of elemental power. Weapons like this one are key parts of ceremonies and rituals used by the priests of elemental evil. The mightiest champions of elemental evil receive these weapons as marks of skill and favor.

Your sword was a normal weapon until you drove it into an altar dedicated to elemental evil found in the crypts beneath the moathouse. The altar was infused with earth, air, fire, and water in equal measure. Those energies flowed from the altar and into your weapon, imbuing it with a number of magical properties.

History

- This weapon was once wielded by a hero named Kelren.
- Kelren fought the denizens of a temple dedicated to elemental evil that arose in the southwestern regions of the Flanaess.
- Kelren stole the sword from the cult and turned it against them.
- The sword was a key component in destroying nodes of elemental power.
- Crippling each of these places in turn allowed Kelren to smash the cult.

Properties

- +2 enhancement bonus
- **Weapon of Arcane Power (Property):** You may apply the sword's enhancement bonus to implement powers.
- **Weapon of Elemental Might (Daily):** Minor action. Until the end of the encounter, you may apply one of the following effects at the start of each of your turns.
- *Fiery Rebuke:* Each foe adjacent to you takes 2 fire damage.
- *Buffeting Winds:* Slide each creature adjacent to you 1 square.
- *Watery Step:* You may shift 2 squares.
- *Earthen Grasp:* Until the end of your turn, each foe you hit with the sword is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Music of the Season

Clearly music plays a big part in D&D games, and my co-workers are no exception.

Jefferson's game rivals that of a Quentin Tarantino movie in the soundtrack department. For instance, his Eberron game has a "pulp-sounding" soundtrack (Raiders of the Lost Ark, Pirates of the Caribbean, Sky Captain, and so on). Once the party wound up in a huge pirate bar. Then he played James Brown. Obviously.

Mr. Bilsland struck again with this doozy. Everyone in his game has a character song, which is included on his 4-hour "combat playlist." Whenever combat breaks out, the music plays. If a character's song comes up, he or she gets an additional action point to be spent during their next turn. What would Tabby's be? *Burning Down the House? Light My Fire? Hot Hot Hot?*

Silver and Gold

Remember how in school the really good teachers made sure that everyone in class got a Valentine's Day card? Well, Mr. Bilsland makes sure that everyone's character goes home with something useful that they can use next session. He doles out treasure each session "with reckless abandon." I bet he also gives out full-size candy bars on Halloween. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (and a Shot of Tequila)

Guess who gives out fun points? That's right– Mr. Bilsland! He has a "fun list" comprised of 100 bonuses your characters can get. When you accumulate 10 points, you can turn it in for a roll on the list. And how do you accumulate points, you ask? He's got a system for that too.

• Write up a character background: 10 points

• Arrive on time to a D&D session and come prepared with character sheet, pencils, paper, books dice, power cards, and everything else you need: 1 point

• Note-taking (anyone who takes thorough notes): 3 points

• Bring snack food or drinks: 2 points

• Bringing props for your character—clothing items, weapons, trinkets, and so on: 1 point/session

• Cover your mouth when coughing: 2 points

• Look both ways when crossing the street: 3 points

• Saying "please" and "thank you": 12 points.

Maybe I added the last three, but you get the point.

Mr. Bilsland also lets you give out up to 2 fun points per game to other players to reward them for things like good roleplaying, creativity, and over all just being fun. Aw, Mr. Bilsland! Here's 100 points for you!

And here is something that is not so much a rule but an unwritten curse according to Jefferson: "He who sitteth at the right hand of the DM, thou shalt roll badly."

For the record, I always sit on the left, use my pink d20, say please and thank you, and continue to roll poorly. Maybe I do need a shot of tequila and some James Brown.

Wherever the holidays take you this season, maybe you'll find time for a little D&D, and maybe you'll be inspired to incorporate some new rules into your game. Personally I'm looking forward to a rousing game of *Monopoly* with my brother when I go home and adding a few of my own house rules. For example, whenever my brother evicts me from my bungalow on Baltic Avenue, he has to do a shot of Sambuca and dance like James Brown. And I know he'll do it too. The bitchin' staff Mike Mearls has designed for me will see to that.

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble *is visiting her family right now and probably crying because her brother broke her custom designed staff.*

Winter Wonders, Upcoming

BY CHRIS TULACH
illustrations by Eric L. Williams

While the weather outside might be cold, nasty, or just plain dismal, here in Organized Play, we're huddled around our heaters and computer screens, planning, plotting, and scheming up our 2010 offerings. Here's some of the latest developments and news!

Weekend in the Realms Recap

This past November 6-8, Living Forgotten Realms gamers participated worldwide in Weekend in the Realms, a celebration of the largest D&D shared-world campaign (now about 16 months old) and an opportunity to play an exclusive adventure! "The Icy Queen's Crossing" was the first LFR adventure to offer a tie-in with a *Forgotten Realms* novel—specifically, *The Fall of Highwatch*. Characters journeyed to the cold lands of Narfell, encountered the tribal Creel, and dealt with demons in the aftermath of the events detailed in the novel. Look for more tie-ins with novels and other products in the future, as LFR continues to take you on a journey throughout the Realms. Keep an eye on the Living Forgotten Realms Community page for future information.

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Get Social! Official D&D Twitter Channel & More

Social networking tools are growing at a phenomenal pace, and we're trying to keep up with the latest and greatest here at Wizards. In fact, we've just launched an official Twitter channel, or if you're already on Twitter, simply hit up @Wizards_DnD to follow hot news and spur-of-the-moment discussions. You can bet that Organized Play updates will occasionally flow through there as well.

Can't keep up with what's where? Here's a list of where you can find D&D Organized Play information on various social networking platforms:

Twitter: A place for quick, real-time news and discussion parsed out in 140-character "tweets," our official Twitter channel will give you hot updates, news and musings about the D&D game, upcoming products, events, and interesting "slices of life" of the folks working on the game. Head to the page to see recent tweets or follow through your own Twitter account by checking out @Wizards_DnD.

Facebook: Friend us today and keep up with D&D news and talk through our official Facebook page. With over 20,000 fans at last count, our Facebook page is a great place to get updates on our upcoming products and events and to interact with other Facebook friends who play D&D. You might even find an exclusive spoiler or two from time to time!

Wizards Community: Our official network of groups, forums, blogs, and more that give you the depth of information you want when you want it. Visit our official groups for detailed information about our Organized Play programs, including Living Forgotten Realms and Worldwide D&D Game Days. You can also search for stores and play locations near you, and even find people, including Wizards staff. If you really want to find the answers to tough questions, you can hit up the forums. The community is there to help!

LFR Adventures Premiere in Public

Starting in January, new Living Forgotten Realms adventures will be available first to those running public games scheduled through the Wizards Play Network. It's our hope that local organizers will find this of great benefit, as game stores and conventions will now be able to premiere almost all LFR adventures approximately 3 months before these adventures become available for home play. So, head to your local game shop or convention to try out the hottest new offerings for Living Forgotten Realms!

D&D Experience: January 28-31

Just around the corner is our feature D&D convention for the year—D&D Experience! Taking place in Fort Wayne, Indiana January 28-31, D&D Experience will be your place to get the inside track on what's going on with the game for 2010. We'll have a detailed breakdown of (most) everything to expect at the show in the January column, but you can see a full schedule over at the D&D Experience website and register for games. Run by our go-to big show organizer David Christ, here's just a short list of some of the exciting activities we have in store this year:

Dark Sun Sneak Peek. You want to know about the world of Athas in 4th Edition? There's no better place to be than D&D Experience! We'll have a special preview adventure using monsters and characters from the upcoming Dark Sun products so you can have a hands-on experience with the new rules. In addition, we'll be offering a seminar discussing Dark Sun hosted by lead designer Rich Baker.

Player's Handbook 3 Preview. If you check out the Dark Sun adventure at the show, you might see some flashes of more *Player's Handbook 3* content that has yet to be spoiled anywhere else. In addition, we'll have a 2010 Product Preview seminar where we'll discuss *Player's Handbook 3* and give more details on what you can find within its pages.

Other Upcoming Surprises. More than just our big early releases during the year, we're going to save a few surprises for show time. You can expect to have close encounters with products releasing in the first half of 2010 during the show in various places. If you're going to the show, keep your eyes peeled!

Seminars Galore. We're expanding our seminar content this year with at least a half a dozen seminars and workshops taking place, including the return of the ever-popular Annual Product Preview (get ready to tweet and blog) and the DM-troubleshooting workshop Save My Game! In addition, seminars on D&D Organized Play (another good one for spoilers), Dark Sun, Adventure Design, and D&D in the Digital Realm will be offered during the show. A complete seminar schedule with descriptions will be available soon on the D&D Experience website, but as a heads up, all seminars will take place during the afternoon gaming slot (starting at 1 p.m.) each day.

Access to Wizards Staff. D&D Experience is one of the best places to meet and greet the staff that work on the D&D game. This year we have a number of guests who will be running games, hosting seminars, and signing autographs throughout the entire weekend. Staff confirmed as of early December include Mike Mearls and Rich Baker, two prominent D&D RPG designers, as well as Bart Carroll from the *D&D Insider* team, Chris Champagne from our digital department, Trevor Kidd from the community team, and Chris Tulach from D&D Organized Play. Get your book signed, play a game with us, listen to us exchange witty banter at seminars, or just bend our ear to let us know what you think about the game.

Living Forgotten Realms and More. Lest we forget, D&D Experience is also about playing the hottest new adventures in Organized Play, including a bunch of great new Living Forgotten Realms adventures. This year, all of the LFR core adventures and specials tie together to create an incredible story arc set in Elturel and present the first-ever battle interactive for the campaign! If you're an LFR player, you won't want to miss this. If you're new to LFR, D&D Experience is a great place to start playing with some great exclusives.

Vendors for Your Gaming Needs. Once again, D&D Experience will have a number of vendors available where you can pick up the latest RPG releases, grab some dice, or get the tool you need to play or DM your game. Don't fret if you forget a rulebook or your dice bag; we'll have you covered at the show.

Cool Takeaways. If you preregister for the show, you'll receive a cool D&D backpack (while supplies last), and there will be some great new D&D Rewards cards in addition to other goodies. If you want to commemorate your time spent in beautiful Fort Wayne, we'll even have a great-looking "rock concert" style D&D t-shirt for sale at the show!

That's all for this month. Have a warm and festive holiday season, and we'll see you in 2010!

New Living Forgotten Realms Adventures Releasing This Month

Check out the latest adventure offerings for December!

December 2, 2009

IMPI1-7 Masquerade

A scheming noble's plan may have placed his only daughter in danger, forcing the desperate man to plead for help from outsiders. But political intrigue is not the only game in Impiltur — nor the most dangerous. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Impiltur for characters levels 4–7.

TYMA1-7 Stolen Cargo

There are many dangers on the open sea — and beneath the waves. Adventurers are able to defend themselves, but the rest of your ship's crew is not so fortunate. Now it falls to you to rescue them from the drowned city of Messemprar. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Tymanther for characters levels 7–10.

December 9, 2009

CORE1-17 Stumbling Toward Harmony

A prophet and his followers are leaving Thesk and looking to start a new life. Heroes are needed to protect them on their travels and aid them in finding a new home. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the Hordelands for characters levels 4–7.

LURU1-7 Demonic Dealings

Deep in the Glimmerwood, the Uthgardt Barbarians keep the orcs of Luruar in check. A new ally to the orcs changes the balance of power. House Itharwen, unfortunate victims of the new alliance, are seeking heroes to recover their losses in this battle. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Luruar for characters levels 7–10.

MOON1-7 Treasure Hunt

An old bard's tale, a sunken ship, and a foreign captain: Secrets lost for decades may come to light if you embark on this treasure hunt. You may find riches or be the main course on some beast's table. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in The Moonshae Isles for characters levels 7–10.

December 16, 2009

AKAN1-7 Faint Hope

When antipathy prevents an old man from getting an escort to the south, you are his last resort. Can you help him reach the jungles and a possible cure for his ailing adopted daughter? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Akanûl for characters levels 1–4.

EAST1-7 Right of Passage
The dwarves of Eartheart have delved into the wrong cavern and offended a colony of myconids. Apologies must be made or the price for the dwarves could be steep. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the East Rift for characters levels 4–7.

MINI1-5 Pyrophobia

Lone survivors. Run. Flames. Madness. Run. Trails of Smoke. Watching eyes. RUN! You have thwarted the fire cult's summoning, but at what price? Can you escape the fire cult's advances and reveal their true leader? A double-length Living Forgotten Realms adventure that is part of the Embers of Dawn mini-campaign set in Tarmalune for characters levels 1–4.

December 23, 2009

AGLA1-7 Twilight Ambitions
Aldaron the Loremaster has continued to delve into the mysteries of the ancient Tome of Twilight Boughs. But some of the book's mysteries seem far from ancient, and Aldaron needs the help of adventurers to figure out why. A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in Aglarond for characters levels 7–10. This adventure concludes the Major Quest involving the Tome of Twilight Boughs (which begins in AGLA1-1 Lost Temple of the Fey Gods and continues in AGLA1-4 Through Twilight Boughs).

MYRE1-4 My Realms Adventure P1 2009

A My Realms adventure is the DM's chance to shape the fate of a group of characters. Are you up to the challenge? A Living Forgotten Realms adventure set in the DM's imagination for characters levels 11–14.

December 30, 2009

No adventures this week. Happy Holidays and have a great New Year!

About the Author

Originally thought to have been raised from a humble Midwestern family, **Chris Tulach** actually fell to Earth in a meteorite-shaped capsule flung from a planet far outside our galaxy. While under the yellow rays of Sol, Chris's nerdity far surpasses that of any normal human. Using this precious gift only for good, he has become the *D&D* Organized Play Content Developer, responsible for the development and deployment of *Dungeons & Dragons* organized play programs. He is also the co-author of *E2 Kingdom of the Ghouls*.

Looking Back

This is the time of year for retrospectives, so I've decided to devote this column to reviewing some of the highlights of the past year. Along the way, I may give a hint or two about the year ahead, and I'll show off a couple of items from upcoming products, including Hammerfast: A Dwarven Outpost Adventure Site and The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea game supplement.

BY BILL SLAVICSEK

This is the Year that Was ...

Looking back, I'm proud of what we accomplished over the course of 2009 for the Dungeons & Dragons brand. Great events took place, such as D&D Experience, Gen Con, and a number of amazing D&D Game Days that occurred simultaneously around the world. Great products for the roleplaying game rolled out, including *Player's Handbook 2*, *Monster Manual 2*, and *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*, as well as *Revenge of the Giants*, *Dungeon Delve*, *Primal Power*, and the *Eberron Campaign Guide*.

In the novels, we ended R.A. Salvatore's latest trilogy with a bang in *The Ghost King*, scared some of our younger readers with *A Practical Guide to Vampires*, and otherwise added to the lore of the *Forgotten Realms*, *Dragonlance*, and *Eberron* with a great collection of new tales of action and adventure.

In the miniatures arena, we unleashed some of the best models we've done in a new packaging concept that started with *Monster Manual: Dangerous Delves* and culminated with *Monster Manual: Savage Encounters*, with the Huge set *Monster Manual: Legendary Evils* sandwiched between them.

On the digital front, *Dragon Magazine* and *Dungeon Magazine* have been going strong, turning out exciting and useful content each and every month all year long. This was also the year in which the D&D Character Builder expanded, the D&D Monster Builder was introduced, we launched a new version of our website, and we introduced a new community section complete with personal pages, blogs, and more.

It was a great year, and 2010 promises to be even better. We've got *Player's Handbook 3* and *Dark Sun* on the horizon, among other titles. We've got some surprises in the area of miniatures that I hope to talk about next month. We'll continue to expand and improve our digital offerings. And we've got a bunch of new stuff happening in novels that I'll try to provide information on in the next month or so, including a new series of Dungeons & Dragons novels set in the world established in the core roleplaying game.

Twitter

Soon (quite, quite soon), we'll be launching our official D&D Twitter channel: wizards_dnd. Be sure to follow us in order to find out—via the fastest means possible these days—the latest goings on from around the halls of Wizards of the Coast. We plan on using this channel to tip folks off to announcements, Organized Play event information, occasional in-game

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happenings, and periodic snippets of everyday activities happening here concerning those working on the Dungeons & Dragons brand and suite of products.

HAMMERFAST: A DWARVEN OUTPOST ADVENTURE SITE SNEAK PEEK!

Here's the opening spread from this upcoming product, that features a poster map and background information for dropping this dwarven town into any D&D campaign.

"Assault on persons living or dead without provocation is grounds for prosecution."
—Warning posted at the Trade Gate, Hammerfast

History walks the streets of Hammerfast in the form of the dead, the dwarves and orcs who died in this place more than a century ago. They are now ghosts consigned to wander Hammerfast's streets until the end of days. Hammerfast was once a necropolis, a collection of tombs where the dwarf lords interred their people. As the dwarves' wealth grew, their burial chambers changed from simple stone sepulchers to lavish treasure vaults filled with the material wealth garnered over a lifetime.

Hammerfast transformed from a graveyard into a storehouse for treasure, and thus it became a target. A hundred years ago, the Bloodspear orc tribe conquered the necropolis but gained little from it. The orcs killed the priests and warriors tasked with guarding Hammerfast and started to loot the place, but the dwarves' burial chambers yielded their treasures only grudgingly. The necropolis held street after street of unmarked tombs, some riddled with traps, many empty, and only a few containing great treasure. The orcs suffered great losses to the defenses of Hammerfast and, after butchering its guards and capturing a few of its treasures, they turned their attention to easier targets in other locations.

In time, the dwarves returned to Hammerfast. Due to the fall of the Nerath Empire, the citadels of the dwarves were broken, famine and plague grew thick across the land, and monsters and raiders prowled freely. In the face of such chaos, the dwarves made a fateful decision. Why waste fortifications on the dead? They had no use for it. Thus, Hammerfast was transformed into a town of the living. It has since grown into the largest and richest settlement in the eastern portion of the Nentir Vale.

Yet although Hammerfast has changed, its past lingers on. The remaining sealed tombs stand untouched on pain of death by decree of the Town Council. Ghosts still walk the streets, some of them orc warriors slain in the Bloodspears' attack, others priests of Moradin or the necropolis's doomed guardians, and even a few of them dwarves laid to rest here long ago. Such creatures enjoy full citizenship in Hammerfast, so long as they observe its laws. In a sacred compact struck with Moradin and Gruumsh, the town's founders agreed to respect the dead and defend their resting places in return for the right to settle here.

Welcome to Hammerfast!

Three Unique Traits

There are three points that make Hammerfast unique.

- Hammerfast is a town where the living dwell among the dead. The buildings are tombs and sepulchers, cleared of rubble and refurbished to serve as homes and businesses.
- Some of the tombs remain sealed. Their treasures are a powerful lure for adventurers, but raiding such a tomb is punishable by death. In some of the inhabited tombs, secret doors to forgotten passages and chambers await discovery.
- The dwarves must endure the presence of orcs. As part of the divine compact that created the town, Gruumsh demanded that his dead be honored, too, by a temple devoted to his power.

Using This Book

Hammerfast can be the glue that holds your campaign together, a town that you can use as a base of operations between heroic tier expeditions or as a ready source of urban adventures. Hammerfast provides a framework designed to accommodate a broad range of adventures and serves as a jumping off point for your imagination. It also includes resources you can use to fill in details as you need them during a game session.

A Safety Net: Most of this book focuses on giving you a range of options rather than in-depth details. When you run adventures in Hammerfast, use this book to fill in the blanks that come up in play, allowing you to focus on plot and story. Lay out the map of Hammerfast when the adventurers enter town, and allow them to explore the place as they like between

excursions. If you have designed a dungeon or otherwise have an adventure location they need to visit, place it on the outdoor map in whatever place fits best.

A Campaign Arc: The stories this book sets in place can serve as the framework of a campaign that takes the adventurers from 1st to 10th level. The three villain groups presented at the end of this book provide plenty of opportunities for adventure, such as thwarting the renegade priests of the Circle of Stone or slaying the legendary dragon Calastryx.

An Idea Mine: Many of the descriptions of the nonplayer characters (NPCs) in this book include backgrounds and motivations that make them good sources of adventures. Use these NPCs to build your campaign or to tempt the adventurers into action.

Hammerfast's Legacy

The compact forged between the folk of Hammerfast, Moradin, and Gruumsh created the foundation upon which the town rests. It shapes everyday life and influences the town's development. Of course, as with anything involving dwarves and orcs, it also creates a source of constant tension.

The Compact

When the dwarves first resolved to settle in Hammerfast, the priests of Moradin beseeched their god for guidance. The necropolis was once sacred ground, before the invading orcs defiled it.

A champion of Gruumsh named Tarrak led the assault on Hammerfast. He swore to Gruumsh to destroy the place and loot its treasures. Tarrak died in the assault, along with many other fanatical worshippers of Gruumsh. In Gruumsh's single, baleful eye, Hammerfast became a monument to his worshippers' ferocity.

With two competing deities laying claim to Hammerfast, only a compromise could avert a second war. Moradin and Gruumsh argued and threatened each other through intermediaries, until at last they reached an accord. Gruumsh had no use for the town, but he saw the chance to create a stark reminder of his champion's victory. He demanded that the dwarves set aside part of the town for his priests.

Moradin agreed, but as a condition of his assent insisted on a strict set of rules that both parties must follow. Gruumsh gained his show of defiance, and Moradin ensured that his followers would be safe from Gruumsh's treachery. The rules set forth were simple but inflexible:

- ✦ Worshippers of Gruumsh are not to be attacked or detained within the town as long as they do not commit acts of violence against Hammerfast's residents.
- ✦ Any priest of Gruumsh in the town must aid in its defense should it come under attack.
- ✦ The ghosts that dwell in Hammerfast are to be left alone, as long as they do not attack the living.
- ✦ The temples of Moradin and Gruumsh are sacred ground. If either is attacked by the other, the gods will intervene.

The punishment for violating the compact varies. If a priest of Gruumsh is injured or detained, the dwarves must turn over a priest of Moradin for torture and execution at Gruumsh's temple. Any priest of Gruumsh that violates the compact is struck blind and exiled to certain death in the wilderness. The town guard enforces the law regarding the ghosts: Any attack on the undead is treated like an assault on a living citizen.

The final rule spurs much speculation. The exact nature of the divine intervention was never set forth, but most residents believe that the gods would send a cataclysm to destroy the town if this rule is broken.

Houses of the Dead

Although some of the tombs in Hammerfast were reduced to rubble by the attacking orcs, most were simply picked clean of their contents. The orcs smashed open coffins, pounded sarcophagi into rubble, and scattered remains across the necropolis.

The dwarves rebuilt Hammerfast, keeping as much of the necropolis intact as possible. Most homes and businesses use the same thick-walled stone structures that once housed the dead. The interiors have been cleaned and reorganized. In some buildings, the original sarcophagi, murals, and other decorations remain.

In the summertime, some of the structures become unbearably hot. For this reason, structures in Hammerfast were built downward, not upward. Most families use the first floor of their homes as workshops or for storage, with the basement level set aside for sleeping. Most structures in Hammerfast house several families, each living within a subset of the chambers found in a typical tomb.

The tombs that remain intact are off limits. The town guard patrols the necropolis, and anyone caught looting existing tombs faces a death sentence. That doesn't stop some thieves, and rumors abound of tombs that were looted by thieves despite the vigilance of the town guard.

Many folk suspect that even the tombs now used as homes and businesses still hide ancient treasure chambers, hidden passages, and other secrets. Although looting intact tombs is against the law, tombs that have already been opened are fair game. Thus, adventure might be as close as the secret door beneath one's bed.

Ghosts of the Past

The ghosts of Hammerfast serve as a sobering reminder of its past. Although the ghosts are by no means numerous enough to crowd the streets, a resident of Hammerfast is likely to see a ghost at least once during the course of a week.

Most of the ghosts keep to themselves, avoiding contact with other creatures and content to simply reenact the last few moments before they died or the daily routines they followed in life. Other ghosts linger on for specific reasons. Telg and Kralick in Location 22 are examples of the latter type of ghost.

Ghosts sometimes have a task or another responsibility that they seek to complete. An orc might batter at the door of a sealed tomb, howling as the door remains standing. A dwarf might stand atop the walls, determined to maintain her position in the face of an endless wave of attackers.

For more on Hammerfast, watch for the product release in April!

The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea Sneak Peek!

Many of the dominions in the Astral Sea are surrounded by border areas, often made up of islands. In the dominion of Celestia, shared by the deities Bahamut, Kord, and Moradin, this surroundng island chain is known as the Foothills. The area has a number of unique types of fantastic terrain, which are described below.

Terrain effects in the Foothills derive from either their forbidding environment or the influence of Celestia's deities. Those resulting from the gods' influence are often field effects. Fields potentially affect all or most of an encounter area. They remain dormant until certain actions are undertaken during an encounter. These actions establish small zones that remain active until the end of the encounter.

Armorfields

Where Moradin's exalted tread, armorfields spring up.

Effect: When a creature in an armorfield area takes cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, radiant, or thunder damage, the space that the creature currently occupies becomes a zone until the end of the encounter. While a creature is within the zone, it gains resist 5 damage to that type of damage per tier. If the damage that created the zone has more than one type, the creature that triggered the creation of the zone selects one of those damage types as the resistance the zone confers.

Usage: Enemies that recognize the presence of an armorfield will use it to their advantage by moving into the zone's space. Because of the resistance, they will use attacks of the same type of damage against enemy and ally alike, trusting the resistance to protect their friends.

Drainer Lichen

The Foothills' rockier slopes are mottled by drainer lichen.

Effect: When a creature leaves a square of drainer lichen, it takes ongoing 5 radiant damage per tier until it reenters the drainer lichen square. Each square of drainer lichen can confer this ongoing damage only once each encounter.

Usage: Move enemies to a square of drainer lichen that a character leaves, forcing that character to take ongoing damage until the enemy can be moved off the square. Use soldiers with a high AC to make this tactic very effective.

Gramble

The Foothills' rugged heaths are covered in patches of gramble, a dense, thorny bush with carnivorous instincts.

Effect: Gramble is often difficult terrain, and can also be blocking terrain, as some bushes are tall and thick enough to block line of sight. When a creature ends its turn in or adjacent to a square of gramble, it is restrained until the start of its next turn. When a creature starts its turn in or adjacent to a square of gramble, it takes 5 damage per tier.

Usage: Combine patches of gramble with ranged attackers to create an area of difficult or blocking terrain that the characters have to move through or in between to reach their enemies.

Mercyfields

Locations visited by Bahamut's exalted dragons develop into mercyfields.

Effect: If a creature in a mercyfield area is bloodied, the space that the creature currently occupies becomes a zone until the end of the encounter. When a creature starts its turn within the zone, it gains temporary hit points equal to one-half its healing surge value.

Usage: Put enemy brutes or soldiers in a mercyfield zone to make those creatures more difficult to defeat, especially if the space creates a choke point that the characters need to pass to get to a leader.

Valorfields

When Kord's exalted gather to fight, they leave valorfields in their wake.

Effect: If a creature in a valorfield area is bloodied, the space that the creature currently occupies becomes a zone until the end of the encounter. While a creature is within the zone, it grants combat advantage.

Usage: Have skirmishers and other mobile enemies try to maneuver characters into valorfields. Soldiers with the ability to mark and lock down enemies can maneuver a character onto a valorfield zone to make that character an easier target for its allies.

Check out *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea* **when it release in April.**

Happy holidays everyone!

In Case You Don't Know Him

Bill Slavicsek's gaming life was forever changed when he discovered Dungeons & Dragons in 1976. He became a gaming professional in 1986 when he was hired by West End Games as an editor. He quickly added developer, designer, and creative manager to his resume, and his work helped shape the *Paranoia*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars*, and *Torg* roleplaying games. He even found some time during that period to do freelance work for D&D 1st Edition. In 1993, Bill joined the staff of TSR, Inc. as a designer/editor. He worked on a bunch of 2nd Edition material, including products for Core D&D, *Dark Sun*, *Ravenloft*, and *Planescape*. In 1997, he was part of the TSR crowd that moved to Seattle to join Wizards of the Coast, and in that year he was promoted to R&D Director for D&D. In that position, Bill oversaw the creation of both the 3rd Edition and 4th Edition of the D&D Roleplaying Game. He was one of the driving forces behind the *D&D Insider* project, and he continues to oversee and lead the creative strategy and effort for Dungeons & Dragons.

Bill's enormous list of credits includes *Alternity*, *d20 Modern*, *d20 Star Wars*, *Pokemon Jr.*, *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the *D&D For Dummies* books, and his monthly *Ampersand (&)* column for *Dragon* Magazine.